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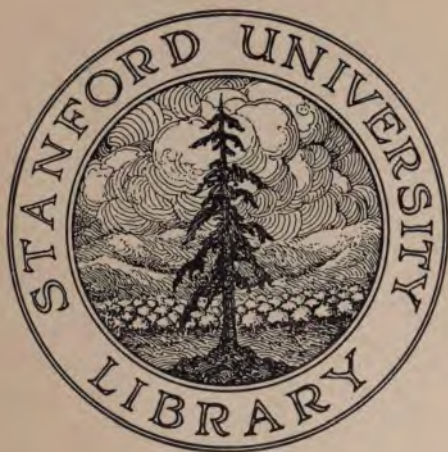
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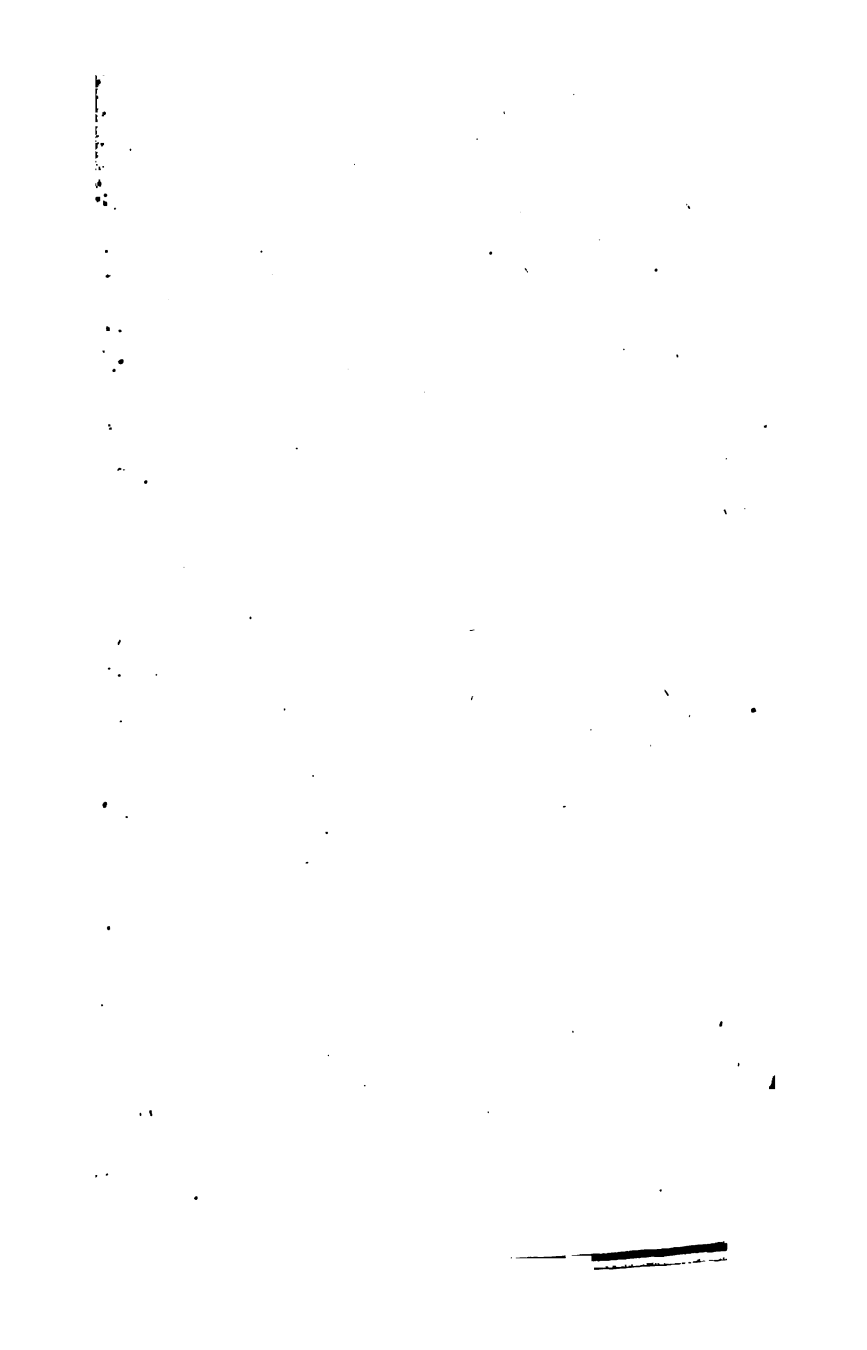
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English Reprints. 8.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

Criticism

on

MILTON'S  
Paradise Lost.

FROM 'THE SPECTATOR.'

31 December, 1711—3 May, 1712.

CAREFULLY EDITED BY

EDWARD ARBER,

*Associate, King's College, London, F.S.A., F.R.G.S., &c.*

W A

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## JOHN MILTON'S PUBLIC SELF-DEDICATION TO THE COMPOSITION OF A GREAT ENGLISH EPIC.

About Feb. 1642, Milton, æt 32, in his third contribution to the Smectymnus controversy, *The Reason of Church-government urg'd against Prelatry*, to show how little delight he had in that which he believed 'God by his Secretary conscience injcyned' upon him therein; he thus magnificently announces his self-dedication to the magnificent purpose of writing a great Epic in his mother tongue.


"I should not chuse this manner of writing wherein knowing myself inferior to my self, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand. And though I shall be foolish in saying more to this purpose, yet since it will be such a folly as wisest men going about to commit, have only confest and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly to have courteous pardon. For although a Poet soaring in the high region of his fancies with his garland and singing robes about him might without apology speak more of himself then I mean to do, yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortall thing among many readers of no Emphyreall conceit, to venture and divulge unusual things of my selfe, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me. I must say therefore that after I had from my first yeeres by the ceaselesse diligence and care of my father, whom God recompence, bin exercis'd to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether ought was impos'd me by them that had the overlooking, or betak'n to of mine own choise in English, or other tongue, prosing and versing, but chiefly this latter, the stile by certain vital signes it had, was likely to live. But much latelier in the privat Academies of *Italy*, whither I was favor'd to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, compos'd at under twenty or thereabout (for the manner is that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there) met with acceptance above what was lookt for, and other things which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were receiv'd with written Encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the *Alps*. I began thus farre to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not lesse to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life) joyn'd with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possesst me, and these other. That if I were certain to write as men buy Leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had, then to Gods glory by the honour and instruction of my country. For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latines, I apply'd my selfe to that resolution which *Aristo* follow'd against the perswasions of *Bembo*, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end, that were a toylsome vanity, but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own Citizens throughout this Iland in the mother dialect. That what the greatest and choycest wits of *Athens*, *Rome*, or modern *Italy*, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I in my proportion with this over and above of being a Christian, might doe for mine: not caring to be once nam'd abroad, though perhaps I could attaine to that, but content with these British Ilands as my world, whose fortune hath hitherto bin, that if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, *England* hath had her noble achievements made small by the unskillfull handling of monks and mechanicks.

Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home in the spacious circuits of her musing hath liberty to propose to her self, though of highest hope, and hardest attempting, whether that Epick form whereof the two poems of *Homer*, and those other two of *Virgil* and *Tasso* are a diffuse, and the book of *Iob* a brief model: or whether the rules of *Aristotle* herein are strictly to be kept; or nature to be follow'd, which in them that know art, and use judgement is no transgression, but an enriching of art. And lastly what King or Knight before the conquest might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Chris-

tian *Herce*. And as *Tasso* gave to a Prince of *Italy* his choise whether he would command him to write of *Godfreys* expedition against the infidels, or *Belisarius* against the *Goths*, or *Charlemain* against the *Lombards*; if to the instinct of nature and the imboldning of art ought may be trusted, and that there be nothing aduers in our climat, or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashnesse from an equal diligence and inclination to present the like offer in our own ancient stories. Or whether those Dramatick constitutions, wherein *Sophocles* and *Euripides* raigne shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a Nation, the Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral Drama in the Song of *Salomon* consisting of two persons and a double *Chorus*, as *Origen* rightly judges. And the Apocalyps of Saint *Iohn* is the majesticke image of a high and stately Tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn Scenes and Acts with a sevenfold *Chorus* of halleluja's and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the grave authority of *Pareus* commenting that booke is sufficient to confirm. Or if occasion shall lead to imitat those magnifick Odes and Hymns wherein *Pindarus* and *Callimachus* are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end faulty: But those frequent songs throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition may be easily made appear over all kinds of Lyrick poesy, to be incomparable. These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely bestow'd, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every Nation: and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of vertu, and publick civility, to allay the pertubations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty Hymns the throne and equipage of Gods Almightynesse, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church, to sing the victorious agonies of Martyrs and Saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious Nations doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ, to deplore the general relapses of Kingdoms and States from justice and Gods true worship. Lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in vertu aimable, or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is call'd fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of mans thoughts from within, all these things with a solid and treatable smoothnesse to paint out and describe. Teaching over the whole book of sanctity and vertu through all the instances of example with such delight to those especially of soft and delicious temper who will not so much as look upon Truth herselfe, unless they see her elegantly drest, that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they would then appeare to all men both easy and pleasant though they were rugged and difficult indeed. . . . The thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have liv'd within me ever since I could conceive my self any thing worth to my Countrie, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath pluckt from me by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above mans to promise; but that none hath by more studious ways endeavour'd, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost averre of my self, as farre as life and free leasure will extend, and that the Land had once infranchis'd her self from this impertinent yoke of prelatory, under whose inquisitorial and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither doe I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be rays'd from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at wast from the pen of some vulgar Amorist, or the trencher fury of a riming parasite, not to be obtain'd by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternall Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallow'd fire of his Altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases: to this must be added industrious and select reading, steddly observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affaires, till which in some measure be compast, at mine  
<sup>in</sup> peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as  
 not loath to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can  
 them.—*pp.* 37—41. *Ed.* 1641.

# Criticism on 'Paradise Lost.'

## INTRODUCTION.

N the ordinary course of writing for *The Spectator*, Addison determined upon a summary exposition of *Paradise Lost*; intending in some four or half a dozen papers, 'to give a general Idea of its Graces and Imperfections.' Though his subject was a recent master-work, it was then comparatively unknown and certainly inadequately appreciated. Addison's purpose was to make Milton's great Epic popular. His sense of the indifference and prejudices to be overcome, may be gathered, not only from his, at first, guarded and argued praise of Milton; his large comparative criticism of Homer and Virgil, as if to make Milton the more acceptable; but also from his announcement, see page 25: where, under the cover of a Commentary on the great and acceptedly-great name of Aristotle, he endeavours to get a hearing for the unknown Milton.

In accordance with this intention, at the close of his sixth paper,† Addison announces the termination of the criticism on the following Saturday. The essays, however, had met with an unexpected success. So that their author—the subject growing easily under his hand—was induced, instead of offering samples of the Beauties of the poem, in one essay, to give a separate paper to those in each of the twelve books of *Paradise Lost*. His caution however prevented him even then, from announcing his fresh purpose, until he was well on in his work; entering upon the consideration of the Fourth Book. §

These conditions of production not only show the tentativeness of the criticism, but account in part for the treatment of the subject. In particular, for the repetition in expanded form in its later essays, of arguments, opinions, &c., epitomized in the earlier

† p. 49.

§ p. 75.



ones. As, for instance ; the impropriety of Allegory in Epic poetry.

Before the appearance of the last of the Milton papers, Volume IV. of the second (first collected) edition of *The Spectator*, which included the first ten essays, had probably been delivered to its subscribers. The text of this edition shows considerable additions and corrections. So that Addison was revising the earlier, possibly before he had written the later of these papers. The eight last papers formed part of Volume V. of the second edition, which was published in the following year, 1713.

Subsequently—in the Author's lifetime—at least one important addition was made to the text†; but the scarcity of early editions of *The Spectator* has prevented any further collation. In this way the growing text grew into final form : that in which it has come down to us.

In the present work, the text is that of the original issue, in folio. The variations and additions of the second edition, in 8vo, are inserted between [ ]. Words in the first, omitted in the second edition are distinguished by having \* affixed to them. Subsequent additions are inserted between { }; which also contain the English translations of the mottoes. These have been verified with those in the earliest edition in which I have found them, that of 1744. The reader can therefore watch not only the expansion of the criticism, but Addison's method of correcting his work.

These papers do not embody the writer's entire mind on the subject. Limited as he was in time, to a week ; in space, to the three or four columns of the Saturday folio : he was still more limited by the capacity, taste, and patience of his readers. Addison shows not a little art in the way in which, meting out his thought with the measure of his readers' minds, he endeavours rather to awaken them from indifference than to express his complete observations. The whole four months' lesson

† pp. 54, 55.

in criticism must be apprehended, as much with reference to those he was teaching to discriminate and appreciate, as to the fettered expression of the critic's own opinion.

The accepted standards in Epic poetry were Homer and Virgil. All that Addison tries to do is to persuade his countrymen to put Milton by their side.

Paganism could not furnish out a real Action for a Fable greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*, and therefore an Heathen could not form a higher Notion of a Poem than one of that kind, which they call an Heroic. Whether *Milton's* is not of a sublimer Nature I will not presume to determine, it is sufficient that I shew there is in *Paradise Lost* all the Greatness of Plan, Regularity of Design, and masterly Beauties which we discover in *Homer* and *Virgil*.†

Possibly it is owing to the then absence of an equal acknowledgment in England of Dante, Addison's consequent limitation of purpose, and the conditions of the production of this criticism, that there is no recognition therein of the great Italian Epic poet.

These papers constitute a Primer to *Paradise Lost*. Most skilfully constructed both to interest and instruct, but still a Primer. As the excellent setting may the better display the gem of incalculable value: so may Addison's thought help us to understand Milton's 'greatness of Soul, which furnished him with such glorious Conceptions.' Let us not stop at the Primer, but pass on to a personal apprehension of the great English Epic; in the persuasion, that in no speech under heaven, is there a poem of more Sublimity, Delight, and Instruction than that which Milton was maturing for a quarter of a century: and that there is nothing human more wonderful and at the same time more true, than those visions of 'the whole System of the intellectual World, the *Chaos* and the Creation; Heaven, Earth, and Hell' over which—in the deep darkness of his blindness—Milton's spirit so long brooded, and which at length he revealed to Earth in his astonishing Poem.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY.

### ADDISON'S CRITICISM ON MILTON'S 'PARADISE LOST.'

\* Editions not seen.

The various editions of *The Spectator* are omitted, for want of space, because the scarcity of its early issues, prevents an exact list being given. See note on the three earliest issues, at p. 10.

#### (a) Issues in the Author's lifetime.

##### I. As a separate publication.

1719. London. Notes on the Twelve Books of *Paradise Lost*, Col-  
1 vol. 12mo. lected from the *SPECTATOR*. Written by Mr. Addison.

#### (b) Issues since the Author's death.

##### I. As a separate publication.

- 1 Aug. London. *English Reprints*: see title at p. 1.  
1868. 1 vol. 8vo.

##### II. With other works.

1721. London. Addison's works [Ed. with Life by T. TICKELL.] The  
4 vols. 4to. criticism occupies iii. 268-382.  
1761. Birmingham. *Baskerville edition*. Addison's works. The criticism  
4 vols. 4to. occupies iii. 246-355.  
1762. London. A familiar Exposition of the Poetical Works of  
1 vol. 8vo. Milton. To which is prefixed Mr. Addison's Criticism  
on 'Paradise Lost.' With a preface by the Rev. Mr.  
Dodd. The criticism occupies pp. 1-144.  
\*1790. Edinburgh. Papers in the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, *Guardian*, and Free-  
4 vols. 8vo. holder, together with his Treatise on the Christian Re-  
ligion, &c. *Watt*.  
1801. London. The Poetical works of John Milton. Ed. by REV.  
6 vols. 8vo. H. J. TODD, M.A. The criticism occupies i. 24-194.  
1804. London. Selections from the *Spectator*, *Tatler*, *Guardian*, and  
3 vols. 8vo. *Freeholder*. With a preliminary Essay by ANNA  
LÆTITIA BARBAULD. The criticism occupies ii. 38-170.  
1804. London. Addison's works. Collected by Mr. TICKELL. The  
6 vols. 8vo. criticism occupies ii. 83-221.  
1811. London. Addison's works. With notes by Bp. HURD. The  
6 vols. 8vo. criticism occupies iv. 78-208.  
1819. London. Second edition of No. 6. The criticism occupies I.  
7 vols. 8vo. 1-153.  
1826. London. Third edition of No. 6. The criticism, without quota-  
6 vols. 8vo. tions, occupies ii. vii.-xcviii.  
1849. London. A new edition of No. 7. The criticism occupies  
2 vols. 8vo. ii. 169-184.  
1856. New York. Addison's works. Ed. by G. W. GREENE. The criticism  
6 vols. 8vo. occupies vi. 24-168.  
1856. London. *Bohn's British Classics*. Addison's works. A new  
6 vols. 8vo. edition of No. 9. The criticism occupies iii. 170-283.





Joseph Addison,  
CRITICISM  
ON  
Milton's  
PARADISE LOST.

FROM 'THE SPECTATOR.'

*Three Poets, in three distant Ages born,  
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.  
The First in loftinejs of thought Surpass'd,  
The Next in Majesty; in both the Last.  
The force of Nature cou'd no farther goe:  
To make a Third she joynd the former two.*

DRYDEN. Under Milton's picture in Tonson's folio  
(the fourth) edition of *Paradise Lost*, &c. 1688.





# NOTE ON THE EARLY ISSUES OF 'THE SPECTATOR.'

- I. 1711. No. 1 of *The Spectator* appears 'To be Continued every Day.'  
Mar. 1. It is a foolscap folio, printed in two columns on each of its two pages; advertisements occupying the greater part of the fourth column. The serial continues for ninety-three weeks,  
June 1. No. 80 appears.
- II. June 1. No. 81 appears.  
Sept. 13. No. 169 appears.
- III. Sept. 14. No. 170 appears.  
Nov. 20. No. 227 has the following announcement. "There is now Printing by Subscription two Volumes of the SPECTATORS on a large character in Octavo; the Price of the two Vols. well Bound and Gilt two Guineas. Those who are inclined to Subscribe, are desired to make their first Payments to Jacob Tonson, Bookseller in the Strand; the Books being so near finished, that they will be ready for the Subscribers at or before Christmas next."  
Dec. 18. No. 251 appears.  
19. No. 252 appears.  
31. No. 262. The papers on Milton are announced.
1712.  
Jan. 5. No. 267. The first paper on *Paradise Lost* appears.  
8. No. 269 has this announcement. "The First and Second Volumes of the SPECTATOR in 8vo are now ready to be delivered to the Subscribers, by J. Tonson at Shakespear's Head over-against Catherine-street in the Strand."  
2nd Ed. Jan. 12. No. 273. The second Milton paper appears.  
18. No. 278 advertises "This Day is Published, A very neat Pocket Edition of the SPECTATOR, in 2 Vols. 12<sup>o</sup>. Printed for Sam. Buckley at the Dolphin in Little-Britain, and J. Tonson at Shakespear's Head over-against Catherine-street in the Strand."  
3rd Ed. Jan. 19—Mar. 8. Eight more papers on *Paradise Lost* appear.
- IV. There is no announcement in the Original issue, when Vols. III and IV were ready for delivery to the subscribers of the first two, of which they were issued, with an Index, as a completion. Vol. III contains a List of the subscribers to the second edition of these earlier numbers of *The Spectator*. The list contains 402 names, including a large proportion of aristocratic titles; and among other the names of Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Richard Blackmore, &c. The probability is that as the subscribers would naturally complete their sets, the reprinting would go on a little in arrear of the Original issue, and that these volumes were delivered some time in April. The 4 volumes apparently realized £1,608.
- VI. V. April? 10. Anne, c. 18 comes into force. It imposes a Stamp duty of an Halfpenny upon every Pamphlet or Paper contained in Half a Sheet, and One Shilling upon every printed advertisement.—*Statutes* ix. 617. This stamp is still seen on many copies.  
Aug. 1. Nov. 11. No. 533 advertises "This Day is Publish'd, A very neat Pocket edition of the 3d and 4th Volumes of the *Spectator* in 12<sup>o</sup>. To which is added a compleat Index to the whole 4 Volumes. &c."  
3rd Ed. Dec. 6. No. 555, Steele announcing, in his own name, the conclusion of the series, states, "I have nothing more to add, but having swelled this Work to 555 Papers, they will be disposed into seven Volumes, four of which are already publish'd, and the three others in the Press. It will not be demanded of me why I now leave off, tho' I must own my self obliged to give an Account to the Town of my Time hereafter, since I retire when their Partiality to me is so great, that an Edition of the former Volumes of *Spectators* of above Nine thousand each Book is already sold off, and the Tax on each half Sheet has brought into the Stamp-Office one Week with another above 20*l*. a Week arising from this single Paper, notwithstanding it at first reduced it to less than half the number that was usually Printed before this Tax was laid." He is evidently referring to the original daily issues.

Two years later, *The Spectator* was revived for about six months.

VIII. 1714. June 18—Dec. 20. Nos 556-635 are published.  
SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIVE PAPERS CONSTITUTE 'THE SPECTATOR'

## The SPECTATOR.

*Nulla venenato Littera missa Foco est.*

Ov.

{*Satirical Reflexions I avoid.*

Another translation.

*My paper flows from no satiric vein,**Contains no poison, and conveys no pain.* Adapted}*Monday, December 31. 1711.*

Think myself highly obliged to the Publick for their kind Acceptance of a Paper which visits them every Morning, and has in it none of those *Seasonings* that recommend so many of the Writings which are in vogue among us.

As, on the one Side, my Paper has not in it a single Word of News, a Reflection in Politicks, nor a Stroke of Party; so, on the other, there are no fashionable Touches of Infidelity, no obscene Ideas, no Satyrs upon Priesthood, Marriage, and the like popular Topicks of Ridicule; no private Scandal, nor any thing that may tend to the Defamation of particular Persons, Families, or Societies.

There is not one of these abovementioned Subjects that would not sell a very indifferent Paper, could I think of gratifying the Publick by such mean and base Methods: But notwithstanding I have rejected every thing that favours of Party, every thing that is loose and immoral, and every thing that might create Uneasiness in the Minds of particular Persons, I find that the Demand for my Papers has encreased every Month since their first Appearance in the World. This does not perhaps reflect so much Honour upon my self, as on my Readers, who give a much greater Attention to Discourses of Virtue and Morality, than ever I expected, or indeed could hope.

When I broke loose from that great Body of Writers who have employed their Wit and Parts in propagating Vice and Irreligion, I did not question but I should be treated as an odd kind of Fellow that had a Mind to appear singular in my Way of Writing: But the general Reception I have found, convinces me that the World is not so corrupt as we are apt to imagine; and that if those Men of Parts who have been employed in viciating the Age had endeavoured to rectify and amend it, they needed not to have sacrificed their good Sense and Virtue to their Fame and Reputation. No Man is so sunk in Vice and Ignorance, but there are still some hidden Seeds of Goodness and Knowledge in him; which give him a Relish of such Reflections and Speculations as have an Aptness in\* them\* to improve the Mind and to make the Heart better.

I have shewn in a former Paper, with how much Care I have avoided all such Thoughts as are loose, obscene, or immoral; and I believe my Reader would still think the better of me, if he knew the Pains I am at in qualifying what I write after such a Manner, that nothing may be interpreted as aimed at private Persons. For this Reason when I draw any faulty Character, I consider all those Persons to whom the Malice of the World may possibly apply it, and take care to dash it with such particular Circumstances as may prevent all such ill-natured Applications. If I write any thing on a black Man, I run over in my Mind all the eminent Persons in the Nation who are of that Complexion: When I place an imaginary Name at the Head of a Character, I examine every Syllable and Letter of it, that it may not bear any Resemblance to one that is real. I know very well the Value which every Man sets upon his Reputation, and how painful it is to be exposed to the Mirth and Derision of the Publick, and should therefore scorn to divert my Reader at the Expence of any private Man.

As I have been thus tender of every particular Person's Reputation, so I have taken more than ordi-



nary Care not to give Offence to those who appear in the higher Figures of Life, I would not make my self merry even with a Piece of Pasteboard that is invested with a publick Character; for which Reason I have never glanced upon the late designed Proceſſion of his Holineſs and his Attendants, notwithstanding it might have afforded Matter to many ludicrous Speculations. Among thoſe Advantages which the Publick may reap from this Paper, it is not the leaſt, that it draws Mens Minds off from the Bitterneſs of Party, and furniſhes them with Subjects of Diſcourſe that may be treated without Warmth or Paſſion. This is ſaid to have been the firſt Deſign of thoſe Gentlemen who ſet on Foot the Royal Society; and had then a very good Effect, as it turned many of the greateſt Genius's of that Age to the Diſquiſitions of natural Knowledge, who, if they had engaged in Politicks with the ſame Parts and Application, might have ſet their Country in a Flame. The Air-Pump, the Barometer, the Quadrant, and the like Inventions, were thrown out to thoſe buſy Spirits, as Tubs and Barrels are to a Whale, that he may let the Ship ſail on without Diſturbance, while he diverts himſelf with thoſe innocent Amuſements.

I have been ſo very ſcrupulous in this Particular of not hurting any Man's Reputation, that I have forbore mentioning even ſuch Authors as I could not name with Honour. This I muſt confeſs to have been a Piece of very great Self-denial: For as the Publick reliſhes nothing better than the Ridicule which turns upon a Writer of any Eminence, ſo there is nothing which a Man that has but a very ordinary Talent in Ridicule may execute with greater Eaſe. One might raiſe Laughter for a Quarter of a Year together upon the Works of a Perſon who has publiſhed but a very few Volumes. For which Reaſons I am aſtoniſhed, that thoſe who have appeared againſt this Paper have made ſo very little of it. The Criticiſms which I have hitherto publiſhed, have been made with an Intention rather to diſcover Beauties and Excellencies in the

Writers of my own Time, than to publish any of their Faults and Imperfections. In the mean while I should take it for a very great Favour from some of my under-hand Detractors, if they would break all Measures with me so far, as to give me a Pretence for examining their Performances with an impartial Eye: Nor shall I look upon it as any Breach of Charity to criticise the Author, so long as I keep clear of the Person.

In the mean while, till I am provoked to such Hostilities, I shall from Time to Time endeavour to do Justice to those who have distinguished themselves in the politer Parts of Learning, and to point out such Beauties in their Works as may have escaped the Observation of others.

As the first Place among our *English* Poets is due to *Milton*, and as I have drawn more Quotations out of him than from any other, I shall enter into a regular Criticism upon his *Paradise lost*, which I shall publish every *Saturday* till I have given my Thoughts upon that Poem. I shall not however presume to impose upon others my own particular Judgment on this Author, but only deliver it as my private Opinion. Criticism is of a very large Extent, and every particular Master in this Art has his favourite Passages in an Author, which do not equally strike the best Judges. It will be sufficient for me if I discover many Beauties or Imperfections which others have not attended to, and I should be very glad to see any of our eminent Writers publish their Discoveries on the same Subject. In short, I would always be understood to write my Papers of Criticism in the Spirit which *Horace* has expressed in those two famous Lines,

—————*Si quid novisti rectius istis*  
*Candidus imperti, si non his utere mecum.*

If you have made any better Remarks of your own, communicate them with Candour; if not, make use of these I present you with.

# The SPECTATOR.

*Cedite Romani Scriptores, cedite Graii.*      Propert.  
 { Give place, ye Roman, and ye Grecian Wits. }

*Saturday, January, 5. 1712.*

**T**HERE is nothing in Nature so irksom[e] as general Discourses, especially when they turn chiefly upon Words. For this Reason I shall wave the Discussion of that Point which was started some Years since, Whether *Milton's Paradise Lost* may be called an Heroick Poem? Those who will not give it that Title, may call it (if they please) a Divine Poem. It will be sufficient to its Perfection, if it has in it all the Beauties of the highest kind of Poetry; and as for those who say [alledge] it is not an Heroick Poem, they advance no more to the Diminution of it, than if they should say *Adam* is not *Aeneas*, nor *Eve Helen*.

I shall therefore examine it by the Rules of Epic Poetry, and see whether it falls short of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*, in the Beauties which are essential to that kind of Writing. The first Thing to be considered in an Epic Poem, is the Fable, which is perfect or imperfect, according as the Action which it relates is more or less so. This Action should have three Qualifications in it. First, It should be but one Action. Secondly, It should be an entire Action; and Thirdly, It should be a great Action. To consider the Action of the *Iliad*, *Aeneid*, and *Paradise Lost* in these three several Lights. *Homer* to preserve the Unity of his Action hastens into the middle of things, as *Horace* has observed: Had he gone up



to *Leda's* Egg, or begun much later, even at the Rape of *Helen*, or the Investing of *Troy*, it is manifest that the Story of the Poem would have been a Series of several Actions. He therefore opens his Poem with the Discord of his Princes, and with great Art interweaves in the several succeeding parts of it, an account of every thing [material] which relates to the Story [them], and had passed before that fatal Diffension. After the same manner *Aeneas* makes his first appearance in the *Tyrrhene* Seas, and within sight of *Italy*, because the Action proposed to be celebrated was that of his Settling himself in *Latium*. But because it was necessary for the Reader to know what had happened to him in the taking of *Troy*, and in the preceding parts of his Voyage, *Virgil* makes his Hero relate it by way of Episode in the second and third Books of the *Aeneid*. The Contents of both which Books come before those of the first Book in the Thread of the Story, tho' for preserving of this Unity of Action, they follow them in the Disposition of the Poem. *Milton*, in Imitation of these two great Poets, opens his *Paradise Lost* with an Infernal Council plotting the Fall of Man, which is the Action he proposed to celebrate; and as for those great Actions, which preceded in point of time, the Battel of the Angels, and the Creation of the World, (which would have entirely destroyed the Unity of his Principal Action, had he related them in the same Order that they happened) he cast them into the fifth, sixth and seventh Books, by way of Episode to this noble Poem.

*Aristotle* himself allows, that *Homer* has nothing to boast of as to the Unity of his Fable, tho' at the same time that great Critick and Philosopher endeavours to palliate this Imperfection in the *Greek* Poet, by imputing it in some Measure to the very Nature of an Epic Poem. Some have been of Opinion, that the *Aeneid* labours also in this particular, and has Episodes which may be looked upon as Excrefcencies rather than as Parts of the Action. On the contrary, the

Poem which we have now under our Consideration, hath no other Epifodes than fuch as naturally arife from the Subject, and yet is filled with fuch a multitude of aftonifhing Circumftances [Incidents], that it gives us at the fame time a Pleafure of the greateft Variety, and of the greateft Simplicity. {uniform in its Nature, though diverfified in the Execution.}

I muft obferve alfo, that as *Virgil* in the Poem which was defigned to celebrate the Original of the *Roman* Empire, has defcribed the Birth of its great Rival, the *Carthaginian* Commonwealth. *Milton* with the like Art in his Poem on the Fall of Man, has related the Fall of thofe Angels who are his profefled Enemies. Befides the many other Beauties in fuch an Epifode, it's running Parallel with the great Action of the Poem, hinders it from breaking the Unity fo much as another Epifode would have done, that had not fo great an Affinity with the principal Subject. In fhort, this is the fame kind of Beauty which the Criticks admire in the *Spanish Fryar*, or the *Double Discovery*, where the two different Plots look like Counterparts and Copies of one another.

The fecond Qualification required in the Action of an Epic Poem is, that it fhould be an *entire* Action: An Action is entire when it is compleat in all its Parts; or as *Aristotle* defcribes it, when it confifts of a Beginning, a Middle, and an End. Nothing fhould go before it, be intermix'd with it, or follow after it, that is not related to it. As on the contrary, no fingle Step fhould be omitted in that juft and regular Progreff [Procefs] which it muft be fupposed to take from its Original to its Consummation. Thus we fee the Anger of *Achilles* in its Birth, its Continuance and Effects; and *Aeneas's* Settlement in *Italy*, carried on through all the Oppofitions in his way to it both by Sea and Land. The Action in *Milton* excels (I think) both the former in this particular; we fee it contrived in Hell, executed upon Earth, and punifhed by Heaven. The parts of it are told in the moft diftinct manner,



and grow out of one another in the most natural Method.

The third Qualification of an Epic Poem is its *Greatness*. The Anger of *Achilles* was of such Consequence, that it embroiled the Kings of *Greece*, destroy'd the Heroes of *Troy*, and engaged all the Gods in Factions. *Aeneas's* Settlement in *Italy* produced the *Cæsars*, and gave Birth to the *Roman* Empire. *Milton's* Subject was still greater than either of the former; it does not determine the Fate of single Persons or Nations, but of a whole Species. The united Powers of Hell are joyned together for the Destruction of Mankind, which they effected in part, and would have completed, had not Omnipotence it self interposed. The principal Actors are Man in his greatest Perfection, and Woman in her highest Beauty. Their Enemies are the fallen Angels: The Messiah their Friend, and the Almighty their Protector. In short, every thing that is great in the whole Circle of Being, whether within the Verge of Nature, or out of it, has a proper Part assigned it in this noble Poem.

In Poetry, as in Architecture, not only the whole, but the principal Members, and every part of them, should be Great. I will not presume to say, that the Book of Games in the *Æneid*, or that in the *Iliad*, are not of this nature, nor to reprehend *Virgil's* Simile of a Top, and many other of the same nature in the *Iliad*, as liable to any Censure in this Particular; but I think we may say, without offence to [derogating from] those wonderful Performances, that there is an unquestionable Magnificence in every Part of *Paradise Lost*, and indeed a much greater than could have been formed upon any Pagan System.

But *Aristotle*, by the Greatness of the Action, does not only mean that it should be great in its Nature, but also in its Duration, or in other Words, that it should have a due length in it, as well as what we properly call Greatness. The just Measure of this kind of Magnitude, he explains by the following

Similitude. An Animal, no bigger than a Mite, cannot appear perfect to the Eye, because the Sight takes it in at once, and has only a confused Idea of the whole, and not a distinct Idea of all its Parts; If on the contrary you should suppose an Animal of ten thousand Furlongs in length, the Eye would be so filled with a single Part of it, that it could not give the Mind an Idea of the whole. What these Animals are to the Eye, a very short or a very long Action would be to the Memory. The first would be, as it were, lost and swallowed up by it, and the other difficult to be contained in it. *Homer* and *Virgil* have shewn their principal Art in this Particular; the Action of the *Iliad*, and that of the *Aeneid*, were in themselves exceeding short, but are so beautifully extended and diversified by the Intervention [Invention] of *Episodes*, and the Machinery of Gods, with the like Poetical Ornaments, that they make up an agreeable Story sufficient to employ the Memory without overcharging it. *Milton's* Action is enriched with such a variety of Circumstances, that I have taken as much Pleasure in reading the Contents of his Books, as in the best invented Story I ever met with. It is possible, that the Traditions on which the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* were built, had more Circumstances in them than the History of the *Fall of Man*, as it is related in Scripture. Besides it was easier for *Homer* and *Virgil* to dash the Truth with Fiction, as they were in no danger of offending the Religion of their Country by it. But as for *Milton*, he had not only a very few Circumstances upon which to raise his Poem, but was also obliged to proceed with the greatest Caution in every thing that he added out of his own Invention. And, indeed, notwithstanding all the Restraints he was under, he has filled his Story with so many surprising Incidents, which bear so close an Analogy with what is delivered in Holy Writ, that it is capable of pleasing the most delicate Reader, without giving Offence to the most scrupulous.

The Modern Criticks have collected from several Hints in the *Iliad* and *Aeneid* the Space of Time, which is taken up by the Action of each of those Poems; but as a great Part of *Milton's* Story was transacted in Regions that lie out of the reach of the Sun and the Sphere of Day, it is impossible to gratifie the Reader with such a Calculation, which indeed would be more curious than instructive; none of the Criticks, either Ancient or Modern, having laid down Rules to circumscribe the Action of an Epic Poem with any determind number of Years, Days, or Hours.†

*This piece of Criticism on Milton's Paradise Lost, shall be carried on in following [Saturdays] Papers.*

† See p. 151.



## The SPECTATOR.

—Notandi sunt tibi Mores.

Hor.

{Note well the Manners.}

Saturday, January 12. 1712.



HAVING examined the Action of *Paradise Lost*, let us in the next place consider the Actors. These are what *Aristotle* means by [This is *Aristotle's* Method of considering; first] the Fable, and [secondly] the Manners, or, as we generally call them in *English*, the Fable and the Characters.

*Homer* has excelled all the Heroic Poets that ever wrote, in the multitude and variety of his Characters. Every God that is admitted into his Poem, acts a Part which would have been suitable to no other Deity. His Princes are as much distinguished by their Manners as by their Dominions; and even those among them, whose Characters seem wholly made up of Courage, differ from one another as to the particular kinds of Courage in which they excell. In short, there is scarce a Speech or Action in the *Iliad*, which the Reader may not ascribe to the Person that speaks or acts, without seeing his Name at the Head of it.

*Homer* does not only out-shine all other Poets in the Variety, but also in the Novelty of his Characters. He has introduced among his *Græcian* Princes a Person, who had lived thrice the Age of Man, and conversed with *Theseus*, *Hercules*, *Polyphemus*, and the first Race of Heroes. His principal Actor is the Off-spring [Son] of a Goddess, not to mention the Son [Off-spring] of *Aurora* [other Deities], who has [have] likewise a Place in his Poem, and the venerable *Trojan* Prince, who was the Father of so many Kings and Heroes. There is in these several Characters of *Homer*.



a certain Dignity as well as Novelty, which adapts them in a more peculiar manner to the Nature of an Heroic Poem. 'Tho', at the same time, to give them the greater variety, he has described a *Vulcan*, that is, a Buffoon among his Gods, and a *Thersites* among his Mortals.

*Virgil* falls infinitely short of *Homer* in the Characters of his Poem, both as to their Variety and Novelty. *Aeneas* is indeed a perfect Character, but as for *Achates*, tho' he is stiled the Hero's Friend, he does nothing in the whole Poem which may deserve that Title. *Gyas*, *Mnestheus*, *Sergestus*, and *Cloanthus*, are all of them Men of the same Stamp and Character,

—*Fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum* [Virg.]

There are indeed several very natural Incidents in the Part of *Ascanius*; as that of *Dido* cannot be sufficiently admired. I do not see any thing new or particular in *Turnus*. *Pallas* and *Evander* are [remote] Copies of *Hector* and *Priam*, as *Lausus* and *Mezentius* are almost Parallels to *Pallas* and *Evander*. The Characters of *Nisus* and *Eurialus* are beautiful, but common. [We must not forget the Parts of *Sinon*, *Camilla*, and some few others, which are beautiful Improvements on the Greek Poet.] In short, there is neither that Variety nor Novelty in the Persons of the *Aeneid*, which we meet with in those of the *Iliad*.

If we look into the Characters of *Milton*, we shall find that he has introduced all the Variety that his Poem was capable of receiving. The whole Species of Mankind was in two Persons at the time to which the Subject of his Poem is confined. We have, however, four distinct Characters in these two Persons. We see Man and Woman in the highest Innocence and Perfection, and in the most abject State of Guilt and Infirmary. The two last Characters are, indeed, very common and obvious, but the two first are not only more magnificent, but more new than any Characters either in *Virgil* or *Homer*, or indeed in the whole Circle of Nature.

*Milton* was so sensible of this Defect in the Subject of his Poem, and of the few Characters it would afford

him, that he has brought into it two Actors of a Shadowy and Fictitious Nature, in the Persons of Sin and Death, by which means he has interwoven in the Body of his Fable a very beautiful and well invented Allegory. But notwithstanding the Fineness of this Allegory may atone for it in some measure; I cannot think that Persons of such a Chymical Existence are proper Actors in an Epic Poem; because there is not that measure of Probability annexed to them, which is requisite in Writings of this kind. [as I shall shew more at large hereafter.]

*Virgil* has, indeed, admitted Fame as an Actress in the *Æneid*, but the Part she acts is very short, and none of the most admired Circumstances in that Divine Work. We find in Mock-Heroic Poems, particularly in the *Dispensary* and the *Lutrin*, several Allegorical Persons of this Nature, which are very beautiful in those Compositions, and may, perhaps, be used as an Argument, that the Authors of them were of Opinion, that \*such Characters might have a Place in an Epic Work. For my own part, I should be glad the Reader would think so, for the sake of the Poem I am now examining, and must further add, that if such empty unsubstantial Beings may be ever made use of on this occasion, there were never any more nicely imagined, and employed in more proper Actions, than those of which I am now speaking. †

Another Principal Actor in this Poem is the great Enemy of Mankind. The part of *Ulysses* in *Homer's Odyssey* is very much admired by *Aristotle*, as perplexing that Fable with very agreeable Plots and Intricacies, not only by the many Adventures in his Voyage, and the Subtilty of his Behaviour, but by the various Concealments and Discoveries of his Person in several parts of that Poem. But the Crafty Being I have now mentioned, makes a much longer Voyage than *Ulysses*, puts in practice many more Wiles and Stratagems, and hides himself under a greater variety of Shapes and Appearances, all of which are severally detected, to the great Delight and Surprise of the Reader.

† See also pp. 45; 70-72; 133-135.

We may likewise observe with how much Art the Poet has varied several Characters of the Persons that speak in his infernal Assembly. On the contrary, how has he represented the whole Godhead exerting it self towards Man in its full Benevolence under the Three-fold Distinction of a Creator, a Redeemer and a Comforter !

Nor must we omit the Person of *Raphael*, who amidst his Tenderneſs and Friendſhip for Man, ſhews ſuch a Dignity and Condeſcention in all his Speech and Behaviour, as are ſuitable to a Superior Nature. [The Angels are indeed as much diverſified in *Milton*, and diſtinguiſhed by their proper Parts, as the Gods are in *Homer* or *Virgil*. The Reader will find nothing aſcribed to *Uriel*, *Gabriel*, *Michael*, or *Raphael*, which is not in a particular manner ſuitable to their reſpective Characters.]

There is another Circumſtance in the principal Actors of the *Iliad* and *Æneid*, which gives a particular [peculiar] Beauty to thoſe two Poems, and was therefore contrived with very great Judgment. I mean the Authors having choſen for their Heroes Perſons who were fo nearly related to the People for whom they wrote. *Achilles* was a *Greek*, and *Æneas* the remote Founder of *Rome*. By this means their Countrymen (whom they principally propoſed to themſelves for their Readers) were particularly attentive to all the parts of their Story, and ſympathized with their Heroes in all their Adventures. A *Roman* could not but rejoice in the Eſcapes, Succeſſes and Victories of *Æneas*, and be grieved at any Deſeats, Miſfortunes, or Diſappointments that beſel him ; as a *Greek* muſt have had the ſame regard for *Achilles*. And it is plain, that each of thoſe Poems have loſt this great Advantage, among thoſe Readers to whom their Heroes are as Strangers, or indifferent Perſons.

*Milton's* Poem is admirable in this reſpect, ſince it is impoſſible for any of its Readers, whatever Nation, Country or People he may belong to, not to be related to the Perſons who are the principal Actors in it ; but what is ſtill infinitely more to its Advantage, the principal Actors in this Poem are not only our



Progenitors, but our Representatives. We have an actual Interest in every thing they do, and no less than our utmost Happiness or \*Misery\* is concerned, and lies at Stake in all their Behaviour.

I shall subjoyn as a Corollary to the foregoing Remark, an admirable Observation out of *Aristotle*, which hath been very much misrepresented in the Quotations of some Modern Criticks. 'If a Man of perfect 'and consummate Virtue falls into a Misfortune, it 'raises our Pity, but not our Terror, because we do 'not fear that it may be our own Case, who do 'not resemble the Suffering Person. But as that great Philosopher adds, 'If we see a Man of Virtues mixt 'with Infirmities, fall into any Misfortune, it does not 'only raise our Pity but our Terror; because we are afraid 'that the like Misfortunes may happen to our selves, 'who resemble the Character of the Suffering Person.

I shall take another Opportunity to observe, that a Person of an absolute and consummate Virtue should never be introduced in Tragedy, and shall only remark in this Place, that this [the foregoing] Observation of *Aristotle*, tho' it may be true in other Occasions, does not hold in this; because in the present Case, though the Persons who fall into Misfortune are of the most perfect and consummate Virtue, it is not to be considered as what may possibly be, but what actually is our own Case; since we are embark'd with them on the same Bottom, and must be Partakers of their Happiness or Misery.

In this, and some other very few Instances, *Aristotle's* Rules for Epic Poetry (which he had drawn from his Reflections upon *Homer*) cannot be supposed to quadrate exactly with the Heroic Poems which have been made since his Time; as it is plain his Rules would have been still more perfect, cou'd he have perused the *Aeneid* which was made some hundred Years after his Death.

*In my next I shall go through other parts of Milton's Poem; and hope that what I shall there advance, as well as what I have already written, will not only serve as a Comment upon Milton, but upon Aristotle.*



## The SPECTATOR.

*Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.*

Hor

{*He knows what best befits each Character.*}*Saturday, January 19. 1712.*

WE have already taken a general Survey of the Fable and Characters in *Milton's Paradise Lost*: The Parts which remain to be consider'd, according to *Aristotle's* Method, are the *Sentiments* and the Language. Before I enter upon the first of these, I must advertise my Reader, that it is my Design as soon as I have finished my general Reflections on these four several Heads, to give particular Instances out of the Poem which is now before us of Beauties and Imperfections which may be observed under each of them, as also of such other Particulars as may not properly fall under any of them. This I thought fit to premise, that the Reader may not judge too hastily of this Piece of Criticism, or look upon it as Imperfect, before he has seen the whole Extent of it.

The Sentiments in an [all] Epic Poem are the Thoughts and Behaviour which the Author ascribes to the Persons whom he introduces, and are *just* when they are conformable to the Characters of the several Persons. The Sentiments have likewise a relation to *Things* as well as *Persons*, and are then perfect when they are such as are adapted to the Subject. If in either of these Cases the Poet argues, or explains, magnifies or diminishes, raises Love or Hatred, Pity or Terror, or any other Passion, we ought to consider whether the Sentiments he makes use of are proper for these [their] Ends. *Homer* is censured by the Criticks for

his Defect as to this Particular in several parts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, tho' at the same time those who have treated this great Poet with Candour, have attributed this Defect to the Times in which he lived. It was the fault of the Age, and not of *Homer*, if there wants that Delicacy in some of his Sentiments, which appears in the Works of Men of a much inferior Genius. Besides, if there are Blemishes in any particular Thoughts, there is an infinite Beauty in the greatest part of them. In short, if there are many Poets who wou'd not have fallen into the mea[n]ness of some of his Sentiments, there are none who cou'd have rise[n] up to the Greatness of others. *Virgil* has excelled all others in the Propriety of his Sentiments. *Milton* shines likewise very much in this Particular: Nor must we omit one Consideration which adds to his Honour and Reputation. *Homer* and *Virgil* introduced Persons whose Characters are commonly known among Men, and such as are to be met with either in History, or in ordinary Conversation. *Milton's* Characters, most of them, lie out of Nature, and were to be formed purely by his own Invention. It shews a greater Genius in *Shakespear* to have drawn his *Caliban*, than his *Hotspur* or *Julius Cæsar*: The one was to be supplied out of his own Imagination, whereas the other might have been formed upon Tradition, History and Observation. It was much easier therefore for *Homer* to find proper Sentiments for an Assembly of *Grecian* Generals, than for *Milton* to diversifie his Infernal Council with proper Characters, and inspire them with a variety of Sentiments. The Loves of *Dido* and *Æneas* are only Copies of what has passed between other Persons. *Adam* and *Eve*, before the Fall, are a different Species from that of Mankind, who are descended from them; and none but a Poet of the most unbounded Invention, and the most exquisite Judgment, cou'd have filled their Conversation and Behaviour with such Beautiful Circumstances during their State of Innocence.

Nor is it sufficient for an Epic Poem to be filled with such Thoughts as are *Natural*, unless it abound also with such as are *Sublime*. *Virgil* in this Particular falls short of *Homer*. He has not indeed so many Thoughts that are Low and Vulgar; but at the same time has not so many Thoughts that are Sublime and Noble. The truth of it is, *Virgil* seldom rises into very astonishing Sentiments, where he is not fired by the *Iliad*. He every where charms and pleases us by the force of his own Genius; but seldom elevates and transports us where he does not fetch his Hints from *Homer*.

*Milton's* chief Talent, and indeed his distinguishing Excellence, lies in the Sublimity of his Thoughts. There are others of the Moderns who rival him in every other part of Poetry; but in the greatness of his Sentiments he triumphs over all the Poets both Modern and Ancient, *Homer* only excepted. It is impossible for the Imagination of Man to distend it self with greater Ideas, than those which he has laid together in his first, [second,] and sixth\* [tenth] Book[s]. The seventh, which describes the Creation of the World, is likewise wonderfully Sublime, tho' not so apt to stir up Emotion in the Mind of the Reader, nor consequently so perfect in the Epic way of Writing, because it is filled with less Action. Let the Reader compare what *Longinus* has observed on several Passages of *Homer*, and he will find Parallels for most of them in the *Paradise Lost*.

From what has been said we may infer, that as there are two kinds of Sentiments, the Natural and the Sublime, which are always to be pursued in an Heroic Poem, there are also two kinds of Thoughts which are carefully to be avoided. The first are such as are affected and unnatural; the second such as are mean and vulgar. As for the first kind of Thoughts we meet with little or nothing that is like them in *Virgil*: He has none of those little Points and Puerilities that are so often to be met with in *Ovid*, none of the



Epigrammatick Turns of *Lucan*, none of those swelling Sentiments which are so frequent[ly] in *Statius* and *Claudian*, none of those mixed Embellishments of *Tasso*. Everything is just and natural. His Sentiments shew that he had a perfect Insight into Human Nature, and that he knew every thing which was the most proper to affect it. \*I remember but one Line in him which has been objected against, by the Criticks, as a point of Wit. It is in his ninth Book, where *Fune* speaking of the *Trojans*, how they survived the Ruins of their City, expresses her self in the following Words;

*Num capti potuere capi, num incensa cremarunt  
Pergama?—*

*Were the Trojans taken even after they were Captives,  
or did Troy burn even when it was in Flames?*

Mr. *Dryden* has in some Places, which I may hereafter take notice of, misrepresented *Virgil's* way of thinking as to this Particular, in the Translation he has given us of the *Aeneid*. I do not remember that *Homer* any where falls into the Faults above mentioned, which were indeed the false Refinements of later Ages. *Milton*, it must be confessed, has sometimes erred in this Respect, as I shall shew more at large in another Paper; tho' considering how all the Poets of the Age in which he writ, were infected with this wrong way of thinking, he is rather to be admired that he did not give more into it, than that he did sometimes comply with that [the] vicious Taste which prevails so much among Modern Writers.

But since several Thoughts may be natural which are low and groveling, an Epic Poet should not only avoid such Sentiments as are unnatural or affected, but also such as are low and vulgar. *Homer* has opened a great Field of Raillery to Men of more Delicacy than Greatness of Genius, by the Homeliness of some of his Sentiments. But, as I have before said, these

\* From 'I remember' to 'Flames?' omitted in second edition.

are rather to be imputed to the Simplicity of the Age in which he lived, to which I may also add, of that which he described, than to any Imperfection in that Divine Poet. *Zoilus*, among the Ancients, and Monsieur *Perrault*, among the Moderns, pushed their Ridicule very far upon him, on account of some such Sentiments. There is no Blemish to be observed in *Virgil* under this Head, and but very few in *Milton*.

I shall give but one Instance of this Impropriety of Sentiments in *Homer*, and at the same time compare it with an Instance of the same nature, both in *Virgil* and *Milton*. Sentiments which raise Laughter, can very seldom be admitted with any decency into an Heroic Poem, whose Business it\* is to excite Passions of a much nobler Nature. *Homer*, however, in his Characters of *Vulcan* and *Thersites*, in his Story of *Mars* and *Venus*, in his Behaviour of *Irus*, and in other Passages, has been observed to have lapsed into the Burlesque Character, and to have departed from that serious Air which seems essential to the Magnificence of an Epic Poem. I remember but one Laugh in the whole *Æneid*, which rises in the Fifth Book upon *Monates*, where he is represented as thrown overboard, and drying himself upon a Rock. But this Piece of Mirth is so well timed, that the severest Critick can have nothing to say against it, for it is in the Book of Games and Diversions, where the Reader's Mind may be supposed to be sufficiently relaxed for such an Entertainment. The only Piece of Pleasantry in *Paradise Lost*, is where the Evil Spirits are described as rallying the Angels upon the Success of their new invented Artillery. This Passage I look upon to be the silliest [most exceptionable] in the whole Poem, as being nothing else but a string of Puns, and those too very indifferent ones.

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*Satan beheld their Plight,  
And to his Mates thus in derision call'd.  
O Friends, why come not on these Victors proud!*

*E'er while they fierce were coming, and when we,  
 To entertain them fair with open Front,  
 And Breast, (what could we more) propounded terms  
 Of Composition, straight they chang'd their Minds,  
 Flew off, and into strange Vagaries fell,  
 As they would dance, yet for a Dance they seem'd  
 Somewhat extravagant, and wild, perhaps  
 For Joy of offer'd Peace; but I suppose  
 If our Proposals once again were heard,  
 We should compel them to a quick Result,*

*To whom thus Belial in like gamesome mood.  
 Leader, the Terms we sent, were Terms of weight,  
 Of hard Contents, and full of force urg'd home,  
 Such as we might perceive amus'd them all,  
 And stumbled many; who receives them right,  
 Had need, from Head to Foot, well understand;  
 Not understood, this Gift they have besides,  
 They shew us when our Foes walk not upright.*

*Thus they among themselves in pleasant vein  
 Stood scoffing——*



# The SPECTATOR.

*Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros,  
Regali conspectus in auro nuper & ostro,  
Migret in Obscuras humili sermone tabernas:  
Aut dum vitat humum, nubes & inania captet.* Hor.

{ *But then they did not wrong themselves so much,  
To make a God, a Hero, or a King  
(Stript of his golden Crown, and purple Robe)  
Descend to a Mechanick Dialect;  
Nor (to avoid such Meanness) soaring high,  
With empty Sound, and airy Notions, fly.*  
Roscommon. }

Saturday, January 26. 1712.



HAVING already treated of the Fable, the Characters, and Sentiments in the *Paradise Lost*, we are in the last place to consider the *Language*; and as the learned World is very much divided upon *Milton* as to this Point, I hope they will excuse me if I appear particular in any of my Opinions, and encline to those who judge the most advantageously of the Author.

It is requisite that the Language of an Heroic Poem should be both Perspicuous and Sublime. In proportion as either of these two Qualities are wanting, the Language is imperfect. Perspicuity is the first and most necessary Qualification; insomuch, that a good-natured Reader sometimes overlooks a little Slip even in the Grammar or Syntax, where it is impossible for him to mistake the Poet's Sense. Of this kind is that Passage in *Milton*, wherein he speaks of *Satan*.



——— *God and his Son except,  
Created thing nought valu'd he nor shunn'd.*

And that in which he describes *Adam* and *Eve*.

*Adam the goodliest Man of Men since born  
His Sons, the fairest of her Daughters Eve.*

It is plain, that in the former of these Passages, according to the natural Syntax, the Divine Persons mentioned in the first Line are represented as created Beings; and that in the other, *Adam* and *Eve* are confounded with their Sons and Daughters. Such little Blemishes as these, when the Thought is great and natural, we should, with *Horace*, impute to a pardonable Inadvertency, or to the Weakness of Human Nature, which cannot attend to each minute Particular, and give the last finishing to every Circumstance in so long a Work. The Ancient Criticks therefore, who were act'd by a Spirit of Candour, rather than that of Cavilling, invented certain figures of Speech, on purpose to palliate little Errors of this nature in the Writings of those Authors, who had so many greater Beauties to atone for them.

If Clearness and Perspicuity were only to be consulted, the Poet would have nothing else to do but to cloath his Thoughts in the most plain and natural Expressions. But, since it often happens, that the most obvious Phrases, and those which are used in ordinary Conversation, become too familiar to the Ear, and contract a kind of Meanness by passing through the Mouths of the Vulgar, a Poet should take particular care to guard himself against Idiomatick ways of speaking. *Ovid* and *Lucan* have many Poornesses of Expression upon this account, as taking up with the first Phrases that offered, without putting themselves to the trouble of looking after such as would not only have been natural, but also elevated and sublime. *Milton* has but few Failings in this kind, of which,



however, you may see an Instance or two [meet with some Instances, as] in the following Passages.

*Embrid's and Idiots, Ercmites and Fryars  
White, Black, and Grey, with all their Trumpery,  
Here Pilgrims roam——*

*——Awhile Discourse they hold,  
No fear lest Dinner cool; when thus began  
Our Author——*

*Who of all Ages to succeed, but feeling  
The Evil on him brought by me, will curse  
My Head, ill fare our Ancestor impure,  
For this we may thank Adam——*

The great Masters in Composition know very well that many an elegant Phrase becomes improper for a Poet or an Orator, when it has been debased by common use. For this reason the Works of Ancient Authors, which are written in dead Languages, have a great Advantage over those which are written in Languages that are now spoken. Were there any mean Phrases or Idioms in *Virgil* and *Homer*, they would not shock the Ear of the most delicate Modern Reader, so much as they would have done that of an old *Greek* or *Roman*, because we never hear them pronounced in our Streets, or in ordinary Conversation.

It is not therefore sufficient, that the Language of an Epic Poem be Perspicuous, unless it be also Sublime. To this end it ought to deviate from the common Forms and ordinary Phrases of Speech. The Judgment of a Poet very much discovers it self in shunning the common Roads of Expression, without falling into such ways of Speech as may seem stiff and unnatural; he must not swell into a false Sublime, by endeavouring to avoid the other Extream. Among the *Greeks*, *Eschylus*, and sometimes *Sophocles*, were guilty of this Fault; among the *Latins*, *Claudian* and *Statius*; and among our own Countrymen, *Shakespeare* and *Lee*. In these Authors the Affectation of Greatness often hurts the Perspicuity of the Style, as in

many others the Endeavour after Perfpicuity prejudices its Greatnefs.

*Aristotle* has obferved, that the Idiomatick Stile may be avoided, and the Sublime formed, by the following Methods. Firft, by the ufe of Metaphors, like thofe of *Milton*.

Imparadis'd in one anothers Arms,  
 ———— And in his Hand a Reed  
 Stood waving tipt with Fire; —  
 The graffe Clods now calv'd. —

In thefe and feveral [innumerable] other Inftances, the Metaphors are very bold but beautiful; I muft however obferve, that the Metaphors are not thick fown in *Milton*, which always favours too much of Wit; that they never clafh with one another, which as *Aristotle* obferves, turns a Sentence into a kind of an Enigma or Riddle; and that he feldom makes ufe of them where the proper and natural Words will do as well.

Another way of raifing the Language, and giving it a Poetical Turn, is to make ufe of the Idioms of other Tongues. *Virgil* is full of the *Greek* Forms of Speech, which the Criticks call *Hellenifms*, as *Horace* in his Odes abounds with them much more than *Virgil*. I need not mention the feveral Dialects which *Homer* has made ufe of for this end. *Milton*, in conformity with the Practice of the Ancient Poets, and with *Aristotle's* Rule has infused a great many *Latinifms*, as well as *Græcifms*, [and fometimes *Hebraifms*,] into the Language of his Poem; as towards the Beginning of it.

Nor did they not perceive the evil plight  
 In which they were, or the fierce Pains not feel.  
 [Yet to their Gen'ral's Voice they soon obey'd.]  
 ———— Who fhall tempt with wandring Feet  
 The dark unbottom'd Infinite Abyfs,  
 And through the palpable Obfcure find out his way.

*His uncouth way, or spread his airy Flight*  
*Upborn with indefatigable Wings*  
*Over the vast Abrupt!—*

[———*So both ascend*  
*In the Visions of God——*

B. 2.]

Under this Head may be reckoned the placing the Adjective after the Substantive, the transposition of Words, the turning the Adjective into a Substantive, with several other Foreign Modes of Speech, which this Poet has naturalized to give his Verse the greater Sound, and throw it out of Prose.

The third Method mentioned by *Aristotle*, is that which [what] agrees with the Genius of the *Greek* Language more than with that of any other Tongue, and is therefore more used by *Homer* than by any other Poet. I mean the lengthning of a Phrase by the Addition of Words, which may either be inserted or omitted, as also by the extending or contracting of particular Words by the Insertion or Omission of certain Syllables. *Milton* has put in practice this Method of raising his Language, as far as the nature of our Tongue will permit, as in the Passage above-mentioned, *Eremit[e]*, [for] what is *Hermit*, in common Discourse. If you observe the Measure of his Verse, he has with great Judgment suppressed a Syllable in several Words, and shortned those of two Syllables into one, by which Method, besides the abovementioned Advantage, he has given a greater Variety to his Numbers. But this Practice is more particularly remarkable in the Names of Persons and of Countries, as *Beëlzebub*, *Hefsebon*, and in many other Particulars, wherein he has either changed the Name, or made use of that which is not the most commonly known, that he might the better deviate from the Language of the Vulgar.

The same Reason recommended to him several old Words, which also makes his Poem appear the more venerable, and gives it a greater Air of Antiquity.

I must likewise take notice, that there are in *Milton*



several Words of his own Coining, as *Cerberian*, *miscreated*, *Hell-doom'd*, *Embryon* Atoms, and many others. If the Reader is offended at this Liberty in our *English* Poet, I would recommend him to a Discourse in *Plutarch*, which shews us how frequently *Homer* has made use of the same Liberty.

*Milton*, by the above-mentioned Helps, and by the choice of the noblest Words and Phrases which our Tongue wou'd afford him, has carried our Language to a greater height than any of the *English* Poets have ever done before or after him, and made the Sublimity of his Stile equal to that of his Sentiments.

I have been the more particular in these Observations of *Milton's* Stile, because it is that part of him in which he appears the most singular. The Remarks I have here made upon the Practice of other Poets, with my Observations out of *Aristotle*, will perhaps alleviate the Prejudice which some have taken to his Poem upon this Account; tho' after all, I must confess, that I think his Stile, tho' admirable in general, is in some places too much stiffened and obscured by the frequent use of those Methods, which *Aristotle* has prescribed for the raising of it.

This Redundancy of those several ways of Speech which *Aristotle* calls *foreign Language*, and with which *Milton* has so very much enriched, and in some places darkned the Language of his Poem, is [was] the more proper for his use, because his Poem is written in Blank Verse. Rhyme, without any other Assistance, throws the Language off from Prose, and very often makes an indifferent Phrase pass unregarded; but where the Verse is not built upon Rhymes, there Pomp of Sound, and Energy of Expression, are indispensably necessary to support the Stile, and keep it from falling into the Flatness of Prose.

Those who have not a Taste for this Elevation of Stile, and are apt to ridicule a Poet when he departs from the common Forms of Expression, would do well to see how *Aristotle* has treated an ancient Author,

called *Euclid*, for his insipid Mirth upon this Occasion. Mr. *Dryden* used to call this sort of Men his Professors.

I should, under this Head of the Language, consider *Milton's* Numbers, in which he has made use of several Elisions, that are not customary among other *English* Poets, as may be particularly observed in his cutting off the Letter *Y*, when it precedes a Vowel. This, and some other Innovations in the Measure of his Verse, has varied his Numbers in such a manner, as makes them incapable of satiating the Ear and cloying the Reader, which the same uniform Measure would certainly have done, and which the perpetual Returns of Rhyme never fail to do in long Narrative Poems. I shall close these Reflections upon the Language of *Paradise Lost*, with observing that *Milton* has copied after *Homer*, rather than *Virgil*, in the length of his Periods, the Copiousness of his Phrases, and the running of his Verses into one another.





# The SPECTATOR.

—*Ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis  
Offendor maculis, quas aut Incuria fudit,  
Aut Humana parum cavit Natura*— Hor.

{ *But in a Poem elegantly writ,  
I will not quarrel with a slight Mistake,  
Such as our Nature's frailty may excuse.*  
Roscommon. }

Saturday, February 2. 1712.



Have now consider'd *Milton's Paradise Lost* under those four great Heads of the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language; and have shewn that he excels, in general, under each of these Heads. I hope that I have made several Discoveries that [which] may appear new, even to those who are versed in Critical Learning. Were I indeed to chuse my Readers, by whose Judgment I would stand or fall, they should not be such as are acquainted only with the *French* and *Italian* Criticks, but also with the Ancient and Moderns who have written in either of the learned Languages. Above all, I would have them well versed in the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets, without which a Man very often fancies that he understands a Critick, when in reality he does not comprehend his Meaning.

It is in Criticism, as in all other Sciences and Speculations; one who brings with him any implicit Notions and Observations which he has made in his reading of the Poets, will find his own Reflections methodized and explained, and perhaps several little Hints that had passed in his Mind, perfected and im-

proved in the Works of a good Critick ; whereas one who has not these previous Lights, is very often an utter Stranger to what he reads, and apt to put a wrong Interpretation upon it.

Nor is it sufficient, that a Man who sets up for a Judge in Criticism, should have perused the Authors above-mentioned, unless he has also a clear and Logical Head. Without this Talent he is perpetually puzzled and perplexed amidst his own Blunders, mistakes the Sense of those he would confute, or if he chances to think right, does not know how to convey his Thoughts to another with Clearness and Perspicuity. *Aristotle*, who was the best Critick, was also one of the best Logicians that ever appeared in the World.

Mr. *Lock's* Essay on Human Understanding would be thought a very odd Book for a Man to make himself Master of, who would get a Reputation by Critical Writings ; though at the same time it is very certain, that an Author who has not learn'd the Art of distinguishing between Words and Things, and of ranging his Thoughts, and setting them in proper Lights, whatever Notions he may have, will lose himself in Confusion and Obscurity. I might further observe, that there is not a *Greek* or *Latin* Critick, who has not shewn, even in the stile of his Criticisms, that he was a Master of all the Elegance and Delicacy of his Native Tongue.

The truth of it is, there is nothing more absurd, than for a Man to set up for a Critick, without a good Insight into all the Parts of Learning ; whereas many of those who have endeavoured to signalize themselves by Works of this Nature among our *English* Writers, are not only defective in the above-mentioned Particulars, but plainly discover by the Phrases which they make use of, and by their confused way of thinking, that they are not acquainted with the most common and ordinary Systems of Arts and Sciences. A few general ideas extracted out of the *French* Authors, with a certain sort of Words, has sometimes set up an Illiterate heavy weight for a most judicious and formidable Critick.

One great Mark, by which you may discover a Critick who has neither Taste nor Learning, is this, that he seldom ventures to praise any Passage in an Author which has not been before received and applauded by the Publick, and that his Criticism turns wholly upon little Faults and Errors. This part of a Critick is so very easie to succeed in, that we find every ordinary Reader, upon the publishing of a new Poem, has Wit and Ill-nature enough to turn several Passages of it into Ridicule, and very often in the right Place. This Mr. *Dryden* has very agreeably remarked in those two celebrated Lines,

*Errors, like Straws, upon the Surface flow;  
He who would search for Pearls must dive below.*

A true Critick ought to dwell rather upon Excellencies than Imperfections, to discover the concealed Beauties of a Writer, and communicate to the World such things as are worth their Observation. The most exquisite Words and finest Strokes of an Author are those which very often appear the most doubtful and exceptionable, to a Man who wants a Relish for polite Learning; and they are these, which a fower [four] undistinguishing Critick generally attacks with the greatest Violence. *Tully* observes, that it is very easie to brand or fix a Mark upon what he calls *Verbum ardens*, or, as it may be rendered into *English*, a *glowing bold Expression*, and to turn it into Ridicule by a cold ill-natured Criticism. A little Wit is equally capable of exposing a Beauty, and of aggravating a Fault; and though such a Treatment of an Author naturally produces Indignation in the Mind of an understanding Reader, it has however its effect among the generality of those whose Hands it falls into, the Rabble of Mankind being very apt to think that every thing which is laughed at with any mixture of Wit, is ridiculous in it self.

Such a Mirth as this, is always unseasonable in a Critick, as it rather prejudices the Reader than con-



vinces him, and is capable of making a Beauty, as well as a Blemish, the Subject of Derision. A Man, who cannot write with Wit on a proper Subject, is dull and stupid, but one who shews it in an improper place, is as impertinent and absurd. Besides, a Man who has the Gift of Ridicule is very\* apt to find Fault with any thing that gives him an Opportunity of exerting his beloved Talent, and very often censures a Passage, not because there is any Fault in it, but because he can be merry upon it. Such kinds of Pleasantry are very unfair and disingenuous in Works of Criticism, in which the greatest Masters, both Ancient and Modern, have always appeared with a serious and instructive Air.

As I intend in my next Paper to shew the Defects in *Milton's Paradise Lost*, I thought fit to premise these few Particulars, to the End that the Reader may know I enter upon it, as on a very ungrateful Work, and that I shall just point at the Imperfections, without endeavouring to enflame them with Ridicule. I must also observe with *Longinus*, that the Productions of a great Genius, with many Lapfes and Inadvertencies, are infinitely preferable to the Works of an inferior kind of Author, which are scrupulously exact and conformable to all the Rules of correct Writing.

I shall conclude my Paper with a Story out of *Boccacini*, which sufficiently shews us the Opinion that Judicious Author entertained of the sort of Criticks I have been here mentioning. A famous Critick, says he, having gathered together all the Faults of an Eminent Poet, made a Present of them to *Apollo*, who received them very graciously, and resolved to make the Author a suitable Return for the Trouble he had been at in collecting them. In order to this, he set before him a Sack of Wheat, as it had been just threshed out of the Sheaf. He then bid him pick out the Chaff from among the Corn, and lay it aside by it self. The Critick applied himself to the Task with great Industry and Pleasure, and after having made the due Separation, was presented by *Apollo* with the Chaff for his Pains.



## The SPECTATOR.

—velut si  
*Egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore nœvos.* Hor.  
 {As perfect beauties often have a Mole. Creech.}

Saturday, February 9, 1712.

**A**FTER what I have said in my last *Saturday's* Paper, I shall enter on the Subject of this without farther Preface, and remark the several Defects which appear in the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language of *Milton's Paradise Lost*; not doubting but the Reader will pardon me, if I alledge at the same time whatever may be said for the Extenuation of such Defects. The first Imperfection which I shall observe in the Fable is, that the Event of it is unhappy.

The Fable of every Poem is according to *Aristotle's* Division either *Simple* or *Implex*. It is called Simple when there is no change of Fortune in it, Implex when the Fortune of the chief Actor changes from Bad to Good, or from Good to Bad. The Implex Fable is thought the most perfect; I suppose, because it is most proper to stir up the Passions of the Reader, and to surprize him with a greater variety of Accidents.

The Implex Fable is therefore of two kinds: In the first the chief Actor makes his way through a long Series of Dangers and Difficulties, 'till he arrives at Honour and Prosperity, as we see in the Stories [Story] of *Ulysses* and \**Æneas*.\* In the second, the chief Actor in the Poem falls from some eminent pitch of Honour and Prosperity, into Misery and Disgrace. Thus we see *Adam* and *Eve* sinking from a State of Innocence and Happiness, into the most abject Condition of Sin and Sorrow.

The most taking Tragedies among the Ancients were built on this last sort of Implex Fable, particularly the Tragedy of *OEdipus*, which proceeds upon a Story, if we may believe *Aristotle*, the most proper for Tragedy that could be invented by the Wit of Man. I have taken some pains in a former Paper to shew, that this kind of Implex Fable, wherein the Event is unhappy, is more apt to affect an Audience than that of the first kind; notwithstanding many excellent Pieces among the Ancients, as well as most of those which have been written of late Years in our own Country, are raised upon contrary Plans. I must however own, that I think this kind of Fable, which is the most perfect in Tragedy, is not so proper for an Heroic Poem.

*Milton* seems to have been sensible of this Imperfection in his Fable, and has therefore endeavoured to cure it by several Expedients; particularly by the Mortification which the great Adversary of Mankind meets with upon his return to the Assembly of Infernal Spirits, as it is described in that [a] beautiful Passage of the tenth Book; and likewise by the Vision, wherein *Adam* at the close of the Poem sees his Off-spring triumphing over his great Enemy, and himself restored to a happier *Paradise* than that from which he fell.†

There is another Objection against *Milton's* Fable, which is indeed almost the same with the former, tho' placed in a different Light, namely, That the Hero in the *Paradise Lost* is unsuccessful, and by no means a Match for his Enemies. This gave occasion to Mr. *Dryden's* Reflection, that the Devil was in reality *Milton's* Hero. I think I have obviated this Objection in my first Paper. The *Paradise Lost* is an Epic, [or a] Narrative Poem, he that looks for an Hero in it, searches for that which *Milton* never intended; but if he will needs fix the Name of an Hero upon any Person in it, 'tis certainly the *Messiah* who

† See p. 147.

is the Hero, both in the Principal Action, and in the [chief] Episode[s]. Paganism could not furnish out a real Action for a Fable greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*, and therefore an Heathen could not form a higher Notion of a Poem than one of that kind, which they call an Heroic. Whether *Milton's* is not of a greater [sublimar] Nature I will not presume to determine, it is sufficient that I shew there is in the *Paradise Lost* all the Greatness of Plan, Regularity of Design, and masterly Beauties which we discover in *Homer* and *Virgil*.

I must in the next Place observe, that *Milton* has interwoven in the Texture of his Fable some Particulars which do not seem to have Probability enough for an Epic Poem, particularly in the Actions which he ascribes to *Sin* and *Death*, and the Picture which he draws of the *Lymbo of Vanity*, with other Passages in the second Book. Such Allegories rather favour of the Spirit of *Spencer* and *Ariosto*, than of *Homer* and *Virgil*.

In the Structure of his Poem he has likewise admitted of too many Digressions. It is finely observed by *Aristotle*, that the Author of an Heroic Poem should seldom speak himself, but throw as much of his Work as he can into the Mouths of those who are his Principal Actors. *Aristotle* has given no Reason for this Precept; but I presume it is because the Mind of the Reader is more awed and elevated when he hears *Aeneas* or *Achilles* speak, than when *Virgil* or *Homer* talk in their own Persons. Besides that assuming the Character of an eminent Man is apt to fire the Imagination, and raise the Ideas of the Author. *Tully* tells us, mentioning his Dialogue of Old Age, in which *Cato* is the chief Speaker, that upon a Review of it he was agreeably imposed upon, and fancied that it was *Cato*, and not he himself, who utter'd his Thoughts on that Subject.

If the Reader would be at the pains to see how the Story of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* is delivered by those



Persons who act in it, he will be surprized to find how little in either of these Poems proceeds from the Authors. *Milton* has, in the general disposition of his Fable, very finely observed this great Rule; inasmuch, that there is scarce a third part of it which comes from the Poet; the rest is spoken either by *Adam* and *Eve*, or by some Good or Evil Spirit who is engaged either in their Destruction or Defence.

From what has been here observed it appears, that Digressions are by no means to be allowed of in an Epic Poem. If the Poet, even in the ordinary course of his Narration, should speak as little as possible, he should certainly never let his Narration sleep for the sake of any Reflections of his own. I have often observed, with a secret Admiration, that the longest Reflection in the *Aeneid* is in that Passage of the Tenth Book, where *Turnus* is represent[ed] as dressing himself in the Spoils of *Pallas*, whom he had slain. *Virgil* here lets his Fable stand still for the sake of the following Remark. *How is the Mind of Man ignorant of Futurity, and unable to bear prosperous Fortune with Moderation? The time will come when Turnus shall wish that he had left the Body of Pallas untouched, and curse the Day on which he dressed himself in these Spoils.* As the great Event of the *Aeneid*, and the Death of *Turnus*, whom *Aeneas* slew because he saw him adorned with the Spoils of *Pallas*, turns upon this Incident, *Virgil* went out of his way to make this Reflection upon it, without which so small a Circumstance might possibly have slipped out of his Reader's Memory. *Lucan*, who was an Injudicious Poet, lets drop his Story very frequently for the sake of [his] unnecessary Digressions or his *Diverticula*, as *Scaliger* calls them. If he gives us an Account of the Prodigies which preceded the Civil War, he declaims upon the Occasion, and shews how much happier it would be for Man, if he did not feel his Evil Fortune before it comes to pass, and suffer not only by its real Weight, but by the Apprehension of it. *Milton's Complaint*



of his Blindness, his Panegyrick on Marriage, his Reflections on *Adam* and *Eve's* going naked, of the Angels eating, and several other Passages in his Poem, are liable to the same Exception, tho' I must confess there is so great a Beauty in these very Digressions, that I would not wish them out of his Poem.

I have, in a former Paper, spoken of the *Characters* of *Milton's Paradise Lost*, and declared my Opinion, as to the Allegorical Persons who are introduced in it.

If we look into the *Sentiments*, I think they are sometimes defective under the following Heads; First, as there are some [several] of them too much pointed, and some that degenerate even into Puns. Of this last kind I am afraid is that in the First Book, where, speaking of the Pigmies, he calls them.

————— *The small Infantry*  
*Warr'd on by Cranes* —————

Another Blemish that appears in some of his Thoughts, is his frequent Allusion to Heathen Fables, which are not certainly of a Piece with the Divine Subject, of which he treats. I do not find fault with these Allusions, where the Poet himself represents them as fabulous, as he does in some Places, but where he mentions them as Truths and Matters of Fact. The Limits of my Paper will not give me leave to be particular in Instances of this kind: The Reader will easily remark them in his Perusal of the Poem.

A Third Fault in his *Sentiments*, is an unnecessary Ostentation of Learning, which likewise occurs very frequently. It is certain that both *Homer* and *Virgil* were Masters of all the Learning of their Times, but it shews it self in their Works after an indirect and concealed manner. *Milton* seems ambitious of letting us know, by his Excursions on Free-will and Predestination, and his many Glances upon History, Astronomy, Geography and the like, as well as by the Terms and Phrases he sometimes makes use of, that he was acquainted with the whole Circle of Arts and Sciences.

If, in the last place, we consider the *Language* of this great Poet, we must allow what I have hinted in a former Paper, that it is [often] too much laboured, and sometimes obscured by old Words, Transpositions, and Foreign Idioms. *Seneca's* Objection to the Stile of a great Author, *Riget ejus oratio, nihil in eâ placidum, nihil lenè*, is what many Criticks make to *Milton*: as I cannot wholly refute it, so I have already apologized for it in another Paper; to which I may further add, that *Milton's* Sentiments and Ideas were so wonderfully Sublime, that it would have been impossible for him to have represented them in their full Strength and Beauty, without having recourse to these Foreign Assistances. Our Language sunk under him, and was unequal to that greatness of Soul, which furnished him with such glorious Conceptions.

A second Fault in his Language is, that he often affects a kind of Jingle in his Words, as in the following Passages, and many others:

*And brought into the World a World of woe.*  
 ———— *Begirt th' Almighty Throne*  
*Befeeching or besieging* ————  
*This tempted our attempt* ————  
*At one Slight bound high overleapt all bound.*

I know there are Figures of this kind of Speech, that some of the greatest Ancients have been guilty of it, and that *Aristotle* himself has given it a place in his Rhetorick among the Beauties of that Art. But as it is in itself poor and trifling, it is I think at present universally exploded by all the Masters of polite Writing.

The last Fault which I shall take notice of in *Milton's* Stile, is the frequent use of what the Learned call *Technical Words*, or Terms of Art. It is one of the great Beauties of Poetry, to make hard things intelligible, and to deliver what is abstruse of it self in such easy Language as may be understood by ordinary Readers: Besides that the Knowledge of a Poet should rather seem born with him, or inspired, than

drawn from Books and Systems. I have often wondered how Mr. *Dryden* could translate a Passage of *Virgil* after the following manner.

*Tack to the Larboard, and stand off to Sea,  
Veer Star-board Sea and Land.*——

*Milton* makes use of *Larboard* in the same manner. When he is upon Building he mentions *Doric Pillars, Pilasters, Cornice, Freeze, Architrave*. When he talks of Heavenly Bodies, you meet with *Eccliptick*, and *Eccentric*, the *trepidation*, *Stars dropping from the Zenith*, *Rays culminating from the Equator*. To which might be added many Instances of the like kind in several other Arts and Sciences.

I shall in my next *Saturday's*\* Paper [Papers] give an Account of the many particular Beauties in *Milton*, which would have been too long to insert under those general Heads I have already treated of, and with which I intend to conclude this Piece of Criticism.



# The SPECTATOR.

— *volet hæc sub luce videri,*  
*Fudicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen.* Hor.

{ — *Some choose the clearest Light,*  
*And boldly challenge the most piercing Eye.* Roscommon. }

*Saturday, February 16. 1712.*



Have seen in the Works of a Modern Philosopher, a Map of the Spots in the Sun. My last Paper of the Faults and Blemishes in *Milton's Paradise Lost*, may be consider'd as a Piece of the same Nature. To pursue the Allusion: As it is observ'd, that among the bright parts of the Luminous Body above-mentioned, there are some which glow more intensely, and dart a stronger Light than others; so, notwithstanding I have already shewn *Milton's Poem* to be very beautiful in general, I shall now proceed to take notice of such Beauties as appear to me more exquisite than the rest. *Milton* has propos'd the Subject of his Poem in the following Verses.

*Of Mans first disobedience, and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste  
 Brought Death into the World and all our wee,  
 With loss of Eden, 'till one greater Man  
 Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,  
 Sing Heav'nly Muse——*

These Lines are perhaps as plain, simple and unadorned as any of the whole Poem, in which particular the Author has conform'd himself to the Example of *Homer*, and the Precept of *Horace*.

His Invocation to a Work which turns in a great



measure upon the Creation of the World, is very properly made to the Muse who inspired *Moses* in those Books from whence our Author drew his Subject, and to the Holy Spirit who is therein represented as operating after a particular manner in the first Production of Nature. This whole Exordium rises very happily into noble Language and Sentiment, as I think the Transition to the Fable is exquisitely beautiful and natural.

The nine Days Astonishment, in which the Angels lay entranced after their dreadful Overthrow and Fall from Heaven, before they could recover either the use of Thought or Speech, is a noble *Circumstance*, and very finely imagined. The Division of Hell into Seas of Fire, and into firm Ground impregnated with the same furious Element, with that particular Circumstance of the exclusion of *Hope* from those Infernal Regions, are Instances of the same great and fruitful Invention.

The Thoughts in the first Speech and Description of *Satan*, who is one of the principal Actors in this Poem, are wonderfully proper to give us a full Idea of him. His Pride, Envy and Revenge, Obstinacy, Despair and Impenitence, are all of them very artfully interwoven. In short, his first Speech is a Complication of all those Passions which discover themselves separately in several other of his Speeches in the Poem. The whole part of this great Enemy of Mankind is filled with such Incidents as are very apt to raise and terrify the Reader's Imagination. Of this Nature, in the Book now before us, is his being the first that awakens out of the general Trance, with his Posture on the burning Lake, his rising from it, and the Description of his Shield and Spear.

*Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate,  
With head up-lift above the wave, and eyes  
That sparkling blazed, his other parts beside  
Prone on the Flood, extended long and large,*

*Lay floating many a rood——  
 Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool  
 His mighty Stature; on each hand the flames  
 Driv'n backward slope their pointing Spires, and rovel'd  
 In Billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.  
 Then with expanded wings he steers his flight  
 Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air  
 That felt unusual weight——*

*——His pondrous Shield  
 Ethereal temper, massie, large and round  
 Behind him cast; the broad circumference  
 Hung on his Shoulders like the Moon, whose orb  
 Thro' Optick Glafs the Tuscan Artists view  
 At Ev'ning from the top of Fefole,  
 Or in Valdarno to descry new Lands,  
 Rivers or Mountains on her spotty Globe.  
 His Spear to equal which the tallest pine  
 Hewn on Norwegian Hills to be the Mast  
 Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand  
 He walk'd with to support uneasy Steps  
 Over the burning Marl——*

To which we may add his Call to the fallen Angels  
 that lay plunged and stupified in the Sea of Fire.

*He call'd so loud, that all the hollow deep  
 Of Hell resounded——*

But there is no single Passage in the whole Poem  
 worked up to a greater Sublimity, than that wherein  
 his Person is described in those celebrated Lines:

*—— He, above the rest  
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent  
 Stood like a Tower, &c.*

His Sentiments are every way answerable to his Character, and are\* fuitable to a created Being of the most exalted and most depraved Nature. Such is that in which he takes Possession of his Place of Torments.

——— *Hail Horrors, hail  
Infernal World, and thou profoundest Hell  
Receive thy new Possessor, one who brings  
A mind not to be changed by place or time.*

And afterwards,

——— *Here at least  
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built  
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:  
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice  
To reign is worth ambition, tho' in Hell:  
Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.*

Amidst those Impieties which this Enraged Spirit utters in other Places of the Poem, the Author has taken care to introduce none that is not big with absurdity, and incapable of shocking a Religious Reader; his Words, as the Poet himself describes them, bearing only a *semblance of Worth, not Substance*. He is likewise with great Art described as owning his Adversary to be Almighty. Whatever perverse Interpretation he puts on the Justice, Mercy, and other Attributes of the Supreme Being, he frequently confesses his Omnipotence, that being the Perfection he was forced to allow him, and the only Consideration which could support his Pride under the Shame of his Defeat.

Nor must I here omit that beautiful Circumstance of his burlesque out in Tears, upon his Survey of those innumerable Spirits whom he had involved in the same Guilt and Ruin with himself.

——— *He now prepared  
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend  
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round  
With all his Peers: Attention held them mute.  
Thrice he assayed, and thrice in spite of Scorn  
Tears such as Angels weep, burst forth——*

The Catalogue of Evil Spirits has a great deal [Abundance] of Learning in it, and a very agreeable turn of

Poetry, which rises in a great measure from his describing the Places where they were worshipped, by those beautiful marks of Rivers so frequent among the Ancient Poets. The Author had doubtless in this place *Homer's* Catalogue of Ships, and *Virgil's* List of Warriors in his view. The Characters of *Moloch* and *Belial* prepare the Reader's Mind for their respective Speeches and Behaviour in the second and sixth Book. The Account of *Thammuz* is finely Romantick, and suitable to what we read among the Ancients of the Worship which was paid to that Idol.

{†————Thammuz came next behind,  
 Whose annual Wound in Lebanon allur'd  
 The Syrian Damsels to lament his fate,  
 In am'rous Ditties all a Summer's day,  
 While smooth Adonis from his native Rock  
 Ran purple to the Sea, suppos'd with Blood  
 Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the Love-tale  
 Infected Sion's Daughters with like Heat,  
 Whose wanton Passions in the sacred Porch  
 Ezekiel saw, when by the Vision led  
 His Eye survey'd the dark Idolatries  
 Of alienated Judah.————

The Reader will pardon me if I insert as a Note on this beautiful Passage, the Account given us by the late ingenious Mr. *Maundrell* of this Antient Piece of Worship, and probably the first Occasion of such a Superstition. 'We came to a fair large River . . . .  
 'doubtless the Antient River *Adonis*, so famous for the  
 'Idolatrous Rites perform'd here in Lamentation of  
 'Adonis. We had the Fortune to see what may be  
 'supposed to be the Occasion of that Opinion which  
 'Lucian relates, concerning this River, viz. That this  
 'Stream, at certain Seasons of the Year, especially about

† This passage was added in the author's life-time, but subsequent to the second edition. The earliest issue with it in that I have seen, is *Notes upon the Twelve Books of 'Paradise Lost.'* London 1719. p. 43.



'the Feast of *Adonis*, is of a bloody Colour; which the  
'Heathens looked upon as proceeding from a kind of  
'Sympathy in the River for the Death of *Adonis*, who  
'was killed by a wild Boar in the Mountains, out of  
'which this Stream rises. Something like this we saw  
'actually come to pass; for the Water was stain'd to  
'a surprising redness; and, as we observed in Travelling,  
'had discolour'd the Sea a great way into a reddish  
'Hue, occasion'd doubtless by a sort of Minium, or  
'red Earth, washed into the River by the violence of  
'the Rain, and not by any stain from *Adonis's* Blood.'}

The Passage in the Catalogue, explaining the manner how Spirits transform themselves by Contraction, or Enlargement of their Dimensions, is introduced with great Judgement, to make way for several surprising Accidents in the Sequel of the Poem. There follows one, at the very End of the First Book, which is what the *French* Critics call *Marvellous*, but at the same time *probable* by reason of the Passage last mentioned. As soon as the Infernal Palace is finished, we are told the Multitude and Rabble of Spirits immediately shrunk themselves into a small Compass, that there might be Room for such a numberless Assembly in this capacious Hall. But it is the Poet's Refinement upon this Thought, which I most admire, and which is indeed very noble in its self. For he tells us, that notwithstanding the vulgar, among the fallen Spirits, contracted their Forms, those of the first Rank and Dignity still preserved their natural Dimensions.

*Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest Forms  
Reduc'd their Shapes immense, and were at large,  
Though without Number still amidst the Hall  
Of that infernal Court. But far within,  
And in their own Dimensions like themselves,  
The Great Seraphick Lords and Cherubim,  
In close recess and Secret conclave sate,  
A thousand Demy Gods on Golden Seats,  
Frequent and full——*

The Character of *Mammon*, and the Description of the *Pandemonium*, are full of Beauties.

There are several other Strokes in the First Book wonderfully poetical, and Instances of that Sublime Genius so peculiar to the Author. Such is the Description of *Azazel's* Stature, and of the Infernal Standard, which he unfurls; and [as also] of that ghastly Light, by which the Fiends appear to one another in their Place of Torments.

*The Seat of Desolation, void of Light,  
Save what the glimmering of those livid Flames  
Casts pale and dreadful—*

The Shout of the whole Host of fallen Angels when drawn up in Battle Array :

*—The Universal Host up sent  
A Shout that tore Hells Concave, and beyond  
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.*

The Review, which the Leader makes of his Infernal Army :

*—He tir'd the arm'd files  
Darts his experienc'd eye, and soon traverse  
The whole Battalion views, their order due,  
Their Vantages and Stature as of Gods,  
Their number last he joins. And now his Heart  
Distends with Pride, and hard'ning in his strength  
Glories—*

The Flash of Light, which appeared upon the drawing of their Swords ;

*He spoke: and to confirm his words outflow  
Millions of flaming Swords, drawn from the Thighs  
Of mighty Cherubim: the sudden blaze  
Near round illumin'd Hell—*

The sudden Production of the *Pandemonium* ;

*—Down out of the Earth a Fabrick huge  
Arose an Exhalation, with the Sound  
Of loud Symphonies and Voice of multitudes  
An Artificial Illumination made in it,*

——— *From the arched Roof*  
*Pendent by subtle Magick, many a Row*  
*Of Starry Lamps and blazing Crescents, fed*  
*With Naptha and Asphaltus yielded Light*  
*As from a Sky——*

There are also several noble Similes and Allusions in the first Book of *Paradise Lost*. And here I must observe, that when *Milton* alludes either to Things or Persons, he never quits his Simile till it rises to some very great Idea, which is often foreign to the Occasion which [that] gave Birth to it. The Resemblance does not, perhaps, last above a Line or two, but the Poet runs on with the Hint, till he has raised out of it some glorious Image or Sentiment, proper to inflame the Mind of the Reader, and to give it that sublime kind of Entertainment, which is suitable to the Nature of an Heroic Poem. Those, who are acquainted with *Homer's* and *Virgil's* way of Writing, cannot but be pleased with this kind of Structure in *Milton's* Similitudes. I am the more particular on this Head, because ignorant Readers, who have formed their Taste upon the quaint Similes, and little Turns of Wit, which are so much in Vogue among Modern Poets, cannot relish these Beauties which are of a much higher nature, and are therefore apt to censure *Milton's* Comparisons, in which they do not see any surprizing Points of Likeness. Monsieur *Perrault* was a Man of this viciated Relish, and for that very Reason has endeavoured to turn into Ridicule several of *Homer's* Similitudes, which he calls *Comparaisons à longue queue, Long-tail'd Comparisons*. I shall conclude this Paper on the First Book of *Milton* with the Answer which Monsieur *Boileau* makes to *Perrault* on this Occasion; 'Comparisons, says he, in Odes and Epic Poems are not introduced only to illustrate and embellish the Discourse, but to amuse and relax the Mind of the Reader, by frequently disengaging him from too painful an Attention to the Principal Subject, and

by leading him into other agreeable Images. *Homer*, says he, excelled in this Particular, whose Comparisons abound with such Images of Nature as are proper to relieve and diversify his Subjects. He continually instructs the Reader, and makes him take notice, even in Objects which are every Day before our Eyes, of such Circumstances as we should not otherwise have observed. To this he adds, as a Maxim universally acknowledged, that it is not necessary in Poetry for the Points of the Comparison to correspond with one another exactly, but that a general Resemblance is sufficient, and that too much nicety in this Particular favours of the Rhetorician and Epigrammatist.

In short, if we look into the Conduct of *Homer*, *Virgil* and *Milton*, as the great Fable is the Soul of each Poem, so to give their Works an agreeable Variety, their Episodes are so many short Fables, and their Similes so many short Episodes; to which you may add, if you please, that their Metaphors are so many short Similes. If the Reader considers the Comparisons in the First Book of *Milton*, of the Sun in an Eclipse, of the Sleeping *Leviathan*, of the Bees swarming about their Hive, of the Fairy Dance, in the view wherein I have here placed them, he will easily discover the great Beauties that are in each of those Passages.





# The SPECTATOR.

*Dæ, quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque silentes,  
Et Chaos, & Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia late;  
Sit mihi fas audita loqui: sit numine vestro  
Pandere res alta terra & caligine mersas.* Virg.

{ *Ye Realms, yet unreveal'd to human Sight,  
Ye Gods who rule the Regions of the Night,  
Ye gliding Ghosts, permit me to relate  
The mystic Wonders of your silent State.* Dryden. }

*Saturday, February 23. 1712.*



Have before observed in general, that the Persons whom *Milton* introduces into his Poem always discover such Sentiments and Behaviour, as are in a peculiar manner conformable to their respective Characters.

Every Circumstance in their Speeches and Actions, is with great justness and delicacy adapted to the Persons who speak and act. As the Poet very much excels in this Consistency of his Characters, I shall beg leave to consider several Passages of the Second Book in this Light. That superior Greatness and Mock-Majesty, which is ascribed to the Prince of the fallen Angels, is admirably preserved in the beginning of this Book. His opening and closing the Debate; his taking on himself that great Enterprize at the Thought of which the whole Infernal Assembly trembled; his encountering the hideous Phantom who guarded the Gates of Hell, and appeared to him in all his Terrors, are Instances of that proud and daring Mind which could not brook Submission even to Omnipotence.

*Satan was now at hand, and from his Seat  
The Monster moving onward came as fast*

*With horrid strides, Hell trembled as he strode,  
Th' undaunted Fiend what this might be admir'd,  
Admir'd, not fear'd——*

The same Boldness and Intrepidity of Behaviour discovers it self in the several Adventures which he meets with during his Passage through the Regions of unform'd Matter, and particularly in his Address to those tremendous Powers who are described as presiding over it.

The Part of *Moloch* is likewise in all its Circumstances full of that Fire and Fury, which distinguish this Spirit from the rest of the fallen Angels. He is described in the first Book as besmear'd with the Blood of Human Sacrifices, and delighted with the Tears of Parents, and the Cries of Children. In the second Book he is marked out as the fiercest Spirit that fought in Heaven; and if we consider the Figure which he makes in the Sixth Book, where the Battel of the Angels is described, we find it every way answerable to the same furious enraged Character.

*——Where the might of Gabriel fought,  
And with fierce Ensigns pierc'd the deep array  
Of Moloc, furious King, who him defy'd,  
And at his chariot wheels to drag him bound  
Threaten'd, nor from the Holy one of Heav'n  
Refrain'd his tongue blasphemous; but anon  
Down cloven to the waste, with shatter'd arms  
And uncouth pain fled bellowing.——*

It may be worth while to observe, that *Milton* has represented this violent impetuous Spirit, who is hurried on by such precipitate Passions, as the *first* that rises in the Assembly, to give his Opinion upon their present Posture of Affairs. Accordingly he declares himself abruptly for War, and appears incensed at his Companions, for losing so much time as even to deliberate upon it. All his Sentiments are Rash, Audacious and Desperate. Such is that of arming themselves with their Tortures, and turning their *Punishments* upon him who inflicted them.

—No, let us rather chuse,  
*Arm'd with Hell flames and fury, all at once*  
*O'er Heavens high tow'rs to force resistless way,*  
*Turning our tortures into horrid arms*  
*Against the Torturer; when to meet the Noise*  
*Of his almighty Engine he shall hear*  
*Infernal Thunder, and for Lightning see*  
*Black fire and horror shot with equal rage*  
*Among his Angels; and his throne it self*  
*Mixt with Tartarean Sulphur, and strange fire,*  
*His own invented Torments—*

His preferring Annihilation to Shame or Misery, is also highly suitable to his Character, as the Comfort he draws from their disturbing the Peace of Heaven, namely, that if it be not Victory it is Revenge, is a Sentiment truly Diabolical, and becoming the Bitterness of this implacable Spirit.

*Belial* is described, in the First Book, as the Idol of the Lewd and Luxurious. He is in the Second Book, pursuant to that Description, characterized as timorous and slothful; and if we look into the Sixth Book, we find him celebrated in the Battel of Angels for nothing but that Scoffing Speech which he makes to *Satan*, on their supposed Advantage over the Enemy. As his Appearance is uniform, and of a Piece, in these three several Views, we find his Sentiments in the Infernal Assembly every way conformable to his Character. Such are his Apprehensions of a second Battel, his Horrors of Annihilation, his preferring to be miserable rather than *not to be*. I need not observe, that the Contrast of Thought in this Speech, and that which precedes it, gives an agreeable Variety to the Debate.

*Mammon's* Character is so fully drawn in the First Book, that the Poet adds nothing to it in the Second. We were before told, that he was the first who taught Mankind to ransack the Earth for Gold and Silver, and that he was the Architect of *Pandæmonium*, or the Infernal Palace, where the Evil Spirits were to

meet in Council. His Speech in this Book is every way [where] suitable to so depraved a Character. How proper is that Reflection, of their being unable to taste the Happiness of Heaven were they actually there, in the Mouth of one, who while he was in Heaven, is said to have had his Mind dazzled with the outward Poms and Glories of the Place, and to have been more intent on the Riches of the Pavement, than on the Beatifick Vision. I shall also leave the Reader to judge how agreeable the following Sentiments are to the same Character.

————— *This deep world  
Of Darknefs do we dread? How oft amidst  
Thick cloud and dark doth Heav'n's all-ruling Sire  
Chuse to reside, his Glory unobscured,  
And with the Majesty of darknefs round  
Covers his Throne; from whence deep thunders roar  
Muftring their rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell?  
As he our darknefs, cannot we his light  
Imitate when we please? This defart Soil  
Wants not her hidden lustre, Gems and Gold;  
Nor want we Skill or Art, from whence to raise  
Magnificence; and what can Heav'n shew more?*

*Beëlzebub*, who is reckon'd the second in Dignity that fell, and is in the First Book, the second that awakens out of the Trance, and confers with *Satan* upon the situation of their Affairs, maintains his Rank in the Book now before us. There is a wonderful Majesty described in his rising up to speak. He acts as a kind of Moderator between the two opposite Parties, and proposes a third Undertaking, which the whole Assembly gives into. The Motion he makes of detaching one of their Body in search of a new World is grounded upon a Project devised by *Satan*, and cursorily proposed by him in the following Lines of the first Book.

*Space may produce new Worlds, whereof so rise  
There went a fame in Heav'n, that he e'er long*



*Intended to create, and therein plant  
A generation, whom his choice regard  
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven :  
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps  
Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere :  
For this infernal Pit shall never hold  
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' Abyfs  
Long under Darknefs cover. But these thoughts  
Full Counsel must mature :——*

It is on this Project that *Beëlzebub* grounds his Proposal.

——— *What if we find  
Some easier enterprize ? There is a place  
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n  
Err not) another World, the happy Seat  
Of some new Race call'd MAN, about this time  
To be created like to us, though less  
In power and excellence, but favoured more  
Of him who rules above ; so was his Will  
Pronounc'd among the Gods, and by an oath,  
That shook Heav'n's whole circumference, confirm'd.*

The Reader may observe how just it was, not to omit in the First Book the Project upon which the whole Poem turns : As also that the Prince of the fall'n Angels was the only proper Person to give it Birth, and that the next to him in Dignity was the fittest to second and support it.

There is besides, I think, something wonderfully beautiful, and very apt to affect the Reader's Imagination, in this ancient Prophecy or Report in Heaven, concerning the Creation of Man. Nothing could shew more the Dignity of the Species, than this Tradition which ran of them before their Existence. They are represented to have been the Talk of Heaven, before they were created. *Virgil*, in compliment to the Roman Common-Wealth, makes the Heroes of it appear in their State of Pre-existence ; But *Milton* does a far greater Honour to Mankind in general, as he gives us a Glimpse of them even before they are in Being.

The rising of this great Affinity is described in a very sublime and Practical manner.

*Their rising all at once was in the sound  
Of Thunder heard remote——*

The Divisions of the fallen Angels, with the particular Account of their Place of Habitation, are described with great Pregnancy of Thought, and Copiousness of Invention. The Divisions are every way suitable to Beings who had nothing left them but Strength and Knowledge misapplied. Such are their Contentions at the Race, and in Feats of Arms, with their Entertainment in the following Lines.

*Others with vast Typhæan rage more fell  
Rend up both Rocks and Hills, and ride the Air  
In Whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar.*

Their Musick is employed in celebrating their own criminal Exploits, and their Discourse in founding the unfathomable Depths of Fate, Free-will, and Foreknowledge.

The several Circumstances in the Description of Hell are very finely imagined; as the four Rivers which disgorge themselves into the Sea of Fire, the Extreame of Cold and Heat, and the River of Oblivion. The monstrous Animals produced in that infernal World are represented by a single Line, which gives us a more horrid Idea of them, than a much longer Description would have done.

—————*Nature breeds,  
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,  
Abominable, inutterable, and worse  
Than Fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,  
Gorgons, and Hydra's, and Chimera's dire.*

This Episode of the fallen Spirits, and their Place of Habitation, comes in very happily to unbend the Mind of the Reader from its Attention to the Debate. An ordinary Poet would indeed have spun out so many

Circumstances to a great Length, and by that means have weakned, instead of illustrated, the principal Fable.

The Flight of Satan to the Gates of Hell is finely imaged.

I have already declared my Opinion of the Allegory concerning *Sin* and *Death*, which is however a very finished Piece in its kind, when it is not considered as a Part of an Epic Poem. The Genealogy of the several Persons is contrived with great Delicacy. *Sin* is the Daughter of *Satan*, and *Death* the Offspring of *Sin*. The incestuous Mixture between *Sin* and *Death* produces those Monsters and Hell-hounds which from time to time enter into their Mother, and tear the Bowels of her who gave them Birth. These are the Terrors of an evil Conscience, and the proper Fruits of *Sin*, which naturally rise from the Apprehensions of *Death*. This last beautiful Moral is, I think, clearly intimated in the Speech of *Sin*, where complaining of this her dreadful Issue, she adds,

Before mine eyes in opposition fits,  
Grim Death thy Son and foe, who sets them on.  
*And me his Parent would full soon devour*  
*For want of other prey, but that he knows*  
*His end with mine involv'd——*

I need not mention to the Reader the beautiful Circumstance in the last Part of this Quotation. He will likewise observe how naturally the three Persons concerned in this Allegory are tempted by one common Interest to enter into a Confederacy together, and how properly *Sin* is made the Portress of Hell, and the only Being that can open the Gates to that World of Tortures.

The descriptive Part of this Allegory is likewise very strong, and full of Sublime Ideas. The Figure of Death, [the Regal Crown upon his Head,] his Menace to Satan, his advancing to the Combat, the Outcry at his Birth, are Circumstances too noble to be past over in Silence, and extreamly suitable to this *King of Terrors*. I need not mention the Justness of Thought which is observed in the Generation of these

several Symbolical Persons; that *Sin* was produced upon the first Revolt of *Satan*, that *Death* appeared soon after he was cast into Hell, and that the Terrors of Conscience were conceived at the Gate of this Place of Torments. The Description of the Gates is very poetical, as the opening of them is full of *Milton's* Spirit.

—————*On a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound  
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate  
Harsh Thunder, that the lowest bottom shook  
Of Erebus. She open'd, but to skut  
Excell'd her Power; the Gates wide open flood,  
That with extended wings a banner'd Host  
Under spread Ensigns marching might pass through  
With Horse and Chariots rank'd in loose array;  
So wide they flood, and like a furnace mouth  
Cast forth redounding smoak and ruddy flame.*

In *Satan's* Voyage through the *Chaos* there are several Imaginary Persons described, as residing in that immense Waste of Matter. This may perhaps be conformable to the Taste of those Criticks who are pleas'd with nothing in a Poet which has not Life and Manners ascribed to it; but for my own part, I am pleas'd most with those Passages in this Description which carry in them a greater Measure of Probability, and are such as might possibly have happened. Of this kind is his first mounting in the Smoak that rises from the infernal Pit: his falling into a Cloud of Nitre, and the like combustible Materials, that by their Explosion still hurried him forward in his Voyage; his springing upward like a Pyramid of Fire, with his laborious Passage through that Confusion of Elements, which the Poet calls

*The Womb of Nature and perhaps her Grave.*

The Glimmering Light which shot into the *Chaos* from the utmost Verge of the Creation, with the distant Discovery of the Earth that hung close by the Moon, are wonderfully beautiful and poetical.



## The SPECTATOR.

*Nec deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
Inciderit*——

Hor.

{ *Never presume to make a God appear,  
But for a Business worthy of a God.* Roscommon. }

Saturday, March 1, 1712.



ORACE advises a Poet to consider thoroughly the Nature and Force of his Genius. *Milton* seems to have known, perfectly well, wherein his Strength lay, and has therefore chosen a Subject entirely conformable to those Talents, of which he was Master. As his Genius was wonderfully turned to the Sublime, his Subject is the noblest that could have entered into the Thoughts of Man. Every thing that is truly great and astonishing, has a place in it. The whole System of the intellectual World; the *Chaos*, and the Creation; Heaven, Earth and Hell; enter into the Constitution of his Poem.

Having in the First and Second Book represented the Infernal World with all its Horrors, the Thread of his Fable naturally leads him into the opposite Regions of Bliss and Glory.

If *Milton's* Majesty forsakes him any where, it is in those Parts of his Poem, where the Divine Persons are introduced as Speakers. One may, I think, observe that the Author proceeds with a kind of Fear and Trembling, whilst he describes the Sentiments of the Almighty. He dares not give his Imagination its full Play, but chuses to confine himself to such Thoughts as are drawn from the Books of the most Orthodox Divines, and to such Expressions as may be met with

in Scripture. The Beauties, therefore, which we are to look for in these Speeches, are not of a Poetical nature, or so proper to fill the mind with Sentiments of Grandeur, as with Thoughts of Devotion. The Passions, which they are designed to raise, are a Divine Love and Religious Fear. The particular Beauty of the Speeches in the Third Book, consists in that Shortness and Perspicuity of Style, in which the Poet has couched the greatest Mysteries of Christianity, and drawn together, in a regular Scheme, the whole Dispensation of Providence, with respect to Man. He has represented all the abstruse Doctrines of Predestination, Free-will and Grace, as also the great Points of Incarnation and Redemption, (which naturally grow up in a Poem that treats of the Fall of Man,) with great Energy of Expression, and in a clearer and stronger Light than I ever met with in any other Writer. As these Points are dry in themselves to the generality of Readers, the concise and clear manner in which he has treated them, is very much to be admired, as is likewise that particular Art which he has made use of in the interspersing of all those Graces of Poetry, which the Subject was capable of receiving.

The Survey of the whole Creation, and of every thing that is transacted in it, is a Prospect worthy of Omniscience; and as much above that, in which *Virgil* has drawn his *Jupiter*, as the Christian Idea of the Supream Being is more rational and Sublime than that of the Heathens. The particular Objects on which he is described to have cast his Eye, are represented in the most beautiful and lively manner.

*Now had th' Almighty Father from above,  
From the pure Empyrean where he sits  
High thron'd above all height, bent down his Eye,  
His own Works and their Works at once to view.  
About him all the Sanctities of Heav'n  
Stood thick as Stars, and from his Sight receiv'd*

*Beatitude past utterance: On his right  
 The radiant image of his Glory sat,  
 His only Son; On earth he first beheld  
 Our two first Parents, yet the only two  
 Of Mankind, in the happy garden plac'd,  
 Reaping immortal fruits of Joy and Love,  
 Uninterrupted joy, unrival'd love,  
 In blissful Solitude; he then survey'd  
 Hell and the Gulf between, and Satan there  
 Coasting the Wall of Heav'n on this side night  
 In the dun air sublime, and ready now  
 To sloop with wearied wings, and willing feet  
 On the bare outside of this world, that seem'd  
 Firm land imbosom'd without firmament,  
 Uncertain which, in Ocean or in Air.  
 Him God beholding from his prospect high,  
 Wherein past, present, future he beholds,  
 Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake.*

Satan's Approach to the Confines of the Creation, is finely imaged in the beginning of the Speech, which immediately follows. The Effects of this Speech in the blessed Spirits, and in the Divine Person, to whom it was addressed, cannot but fill the Mind of the Reader with a secret Pleasure and Complacency.

*Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance fill'd  
 All Heav'n, and in the blessed Spirits elect  
 Sense of new Joy ineffable diffus'd:  
 Beyond compare the Son of God was seen  
 Most glorious, in him all his Father shone  
 Substantially express'd; and in his face  
 Divine Compassion visibly appear'd,  
 Love without end, and without measure Grace.*

I need not point out the Beauty of that Circumstance, wherein the whole Host of Angels are represented as standing Mute; nor shew how proper the Occasion was to produce such a Silence in Heaven. The Close of this Divine Colloquy, with the Hymn of Angels

that follows upon it, are so wonderfully beautiful and poetical, that I should not forbear inserting the whole Passage, if the bounds of my Paper would give me leave.

*No sooner had th' Almighty ceas'd, but all  
The multitude of Angels with a shout  
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet  
As from blest Voices, uttering Joy, Heav'n rung  
With Jubilee, and loud Hosanna's fill'd  
Th' eternal regions; &c. &c. —*

Satan's Walk upon the Outside of the Universe, which, at a Distance, appeared to him of a globular Form, but, upon his nearer Approach, looked like an unbounded Plain, is natural and noble: As his roaming upon the Frontiers of the Creation, between tl at Mafs of Matter, which was wrought into a World, and that shapeless unform'd Heap of Materials, which still lay in *Chaos* and Confusion, strikes the Imagination with something astonishingly great and wild. I have before spoken of the Limbo of Vanity, which the Poet places upon this outermost Surface of the Universe, and shall here explain my self more at large on that, and other Parts of the Poem, which are of the same Shadowy nature.

*Aristotle* observes, that the Fable of an Epic Poem should abound in Circumstances that are both credible and astonishing: or as the *French* Critics chuse to phrase it, the Fable should be filled with the Probable and the Marvellous. This Rule is as fine and just as any in *Aristotle's* whole Art of Poetry.

If the Fable is only probable, it differs nothing from a true History; if it is only Marvellous, it is no better than a Romance. The great Secret therefore of Heroic Poetry is to relate such Circumstances, as may produce in the Reader at the same time both Belief and Astonishment. This often happens [is brought to pass] in a *well chosen* Fable, by the Account of such things as have really happened, or at least of such things as have



happen'd, according to the received Opinions of Mankind. *Milton's* Fable is a Master-piece of this Nature; as the War in Heaven, the Condition of the fallen Angels, the State of Innocence, the Temptation of the Serpent, and the Fall of Man, though they are very astonishing in themselves, are not only credible, but actual Points of Faith.

The next Method of reconciling Miracles with Credibility, is by a happy Invention of the Poet; as in particular, when he introduces Agents of a superior Nature, who are capable of effecting what is wonderful, and what is not to be met with in the ordinary course of things. *Ulysses's* Ship being turned into a Rock, and *Aeneas's* Fleet into a Shoal of Water Nymphs, though they are very surprizing Accidents, are nevertheless probable, when we are told that they were the Gods who thus transformed them. It is this kind of Machinery which fills the Poems both of *Homer* and *Virgil* with such Circumstances as are wonderful, but not impossible, and so frequently produce in the Reader the most pleasing Passion that can rise in the Mind of Man, which is Admiration. If there be any Instance in the *Aeneid* liable to Exception upon this Account, it is in the beginning of the third Book, where *Aeneas* is represented as tearing up the Myrtle that dropped Blood. To qualifie this wonderful Circumstance, *Polydorus* tells a Story from the Root of the Myrtle, that the barbarous inhabitants of the Country having pierced him with Spears and Arrows, the Wood which was left in his Body took Root in his Wounds, and gave birth to that bleeding Tree. This Circumstance seems to have the Marvellous without the Probable, because it is represented as proceeding from Natural Causes, without the Interposition of any God, or rather Supernatural Power capable of producing it. The Spears and Arrows grow of themselves, without so much as the Modern help of an Enchantment. If we look into the Fiction of *Milton's* Fable, though we find it full of surprizing Incidents,

they are generally suited to our Notions of the Things and Persons described, and temper'd with a due measure of Probability. I must only make an Exception to the Lymbo of Vanity, with his Episode of Sin and Death, and some of the imaginary Persons in his *Chaos*. These Passages are astonishing, but not credible; the Reader cannot so far impose upon himself as to see a Possibility in them; they are the Description of Dreams and Shadows, not of Things or Persons. I know that many Critics look upon the Stories of *Circe*, *Polypheme*, the *Sirens*, nay the whole *Odysssey* and *Iliad*, to be Allegories; but allowing this to be true, they are Fables, which considering the Opinions of Mankind that prevailed in the Age of the Poet, might possibly have been according to the Letter. The Persons are such as might have acted what is ascribed to them, as the Circumstances in which they are represented, might possibly have been Truths and Realities. This appearance of Probability is so absolutely requisite in the greater kinds of Poetry, that *Aristotle* observes the Ancient Tragick Writers made use of the Names of such great Men as had actually lived in the World, tho' the Tragedy proceeded upon such Adventures they were never engaged in, on purpose to make the Subject more Credible. In a Word, besides the hidden Meaning of an Epic Allegory, the plain literal Sense ought to appear probable. The Story should be such as an ordinary Reader may acquiesce in, whatever Natural Moral or Political Truth may be discovered in it by Men of greater Penetration.

*Satan*, after having long wandered upon the Surface, or outmost Wall of the Universe, discovers at last a wide Gap in it, which led into the Creation, and which\* is described as the Opening through which the Angels pass to and fro into the lower World, upon their Errands to Mankind. His Sitting upon the brink of this Passage, and taking a Survey of the whole Face of Nature that appeared to him new and fresh in all its

Beauties, with the Simile illustrating this Circumstance, fills the Mind of the Reader with as surprizing and glorious an Idea as any that arises in the whole Poem. He looks down into that vast hollow of the Universe with the Eye, or (as *Milton* calls it in his first Book) with the Kenn of an Angel. He surveys all the Wonders in this immense Amphitheatre that lie between both the Poles of Heaven, and takes in at one View the whole Round of the Creation.

His Flight between the several Worlds that shined on every side of him, with the particular Description of the Sun, are set forth in all the wantonness of a luxuriant Imagination. His Shape, Speech and Behaviour upon his transforming himself into an Angel of Light, are touched with exquisite Beauty. The Poet's Thought of directing *Satan* to the Sun, which in the Vulgar Opinion of Mankind is the most conspicuous Part of the Creation, and the placing in it an Angel, is a Circumstance very finely contriv'd, and the more adjusted to a Poetical Probability, as it was a receiv'd Doctrine among the most famous Philosophers, that every Orb had its *Intelligence*; and as an Apostle in Sacred Writ is said to have seen such an Angel in the Sun. In the Answer which this Angel returns to the disguised Evil Spirit, there is such a becoming Majesty as is altogether suitable to a Superior Being. The part of it in which he represents himself as present at the Creation, is very noble in it self, and not only proper where it is introduced, but requisite to prepare the Reader for what follows in the Seventh Book.

*I saw when at his word the formless Mass,  
This worlds material mould, came to a heap:  
Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar  
Stood rul'd, flood vast infinitude confin'd;  
Till at his second bidding darkness fled,  
Light shon, &c.*

In the following part of the Speech he points out the Earth with such Circumstances, that the Reader

can scarce forbear fancying himself employ'd on the same distant view of it.

*Look downward on that Globe, whose hither side  
With light from hence, tho' but reflected, shines;  
That place is Earth, the Seat of man, that light  
His day, &c.*

I must not conclude my Reflections upon this Third Book of *Paradise Lost*, without taking notice of that celebrated Complaint of *Milton* with which it opens, and which certainly deserves all the Praises that have been given it; tho' as I have before hinted, it may rather be looked upon as an Excrecence, than as an essential Part of the Poem. The same Observation might be applied to that beautiful Digression upon Hypocrisie, in the same Book.





# The SPECTATOR.

*Nec satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunt.* Hor.

{ 'Tis not enough a Poem's finely writ;  
It must affect and captivate the Soul. }

Saturday, March 8. 1712.



THOSE, who know how many Volumes have been written on the Poems of *Homer* and *Virgil*, will easily pardon the Length of my Discourse upon *Milton*. The *Paradise Lost* is look'd upon, by the best Judges, as the greatest Production, or at least the noblest Work of Genius, in our Language, and therefore deserves to be set before an *English* Reader in its full Beauty. For this Reason, tho' I have endeavour'd to give a general Idea of its Graces and Imperfections in my Six First Papers, I thought my self oblig'd to bestow one upon every Book in particular. The Three First Books I have already dispatched, and am now entring upon the Fourth. I need not acquaint my Reader, that there are Multitudes of Beauties in this great Author, especially in the Descriptive Parts of his Poem, which I have not touch'd upon, it being my Intention to point out those only, which appear to me the most exquisite, or those which are not so obvious to ordinary Readers. Every one that has read the Criticks, who have written upon the *Odyssy*, the *Iliad* and the *Æneid*, knows very well, that though they agree in their Opinions of the great Beauties in those Poems, they have nevertheless each of them discovered several Master-Stroaks, which have escap'd the Observation of the rest. In the same manner, I question not, but any Writer, who shall treat of this Subject after me, may find several Beauties in *Milton*,

which I have not taken notice of. I must likewise observe, that as the greatest Masters of Critical Learning differ from one another, as to some particular Points in an Epic Poem, I have not bound my self scrupulously to the Rules, which any one of them has laid down upon that Art, but have taken the Liberty sometimes to join with one, and sometimes with another, and sometimes to differ from all of them, when I have thought that the Reason of the thing was on my side.

We may consider the Beauties of the Fourth Book under three Heads. In the First are those Pictures of Still-Life, which we meet with in the Descriptions of *Eden*, *Paradise*, *Adam's Bower*, &c. In the next are the Machines, which comprehend the Speeches and Behaviour of the good and bad Angels. In the last is the Conduct of *Adam* and *Eve*, who are the principal Actors in the Poem.

In the Description of *Paradise*, the Poet has observed *Aristotle's* Rule of lavishing all the Ornaments of Diction on the weak unactive Parts of the Fable, which are not supported by the Beauty of Sentiments and Characters. Accordingly the Reader may observe, that the Expressions are more florid and elaborate in these Descriptions, than in most other Parts of the Poem. I must further add, that tho' the Drawings of Gardens, Rivers, Rainbows, and the like dead Pieces of Nature, are justly censured in an Heroic Poem, when they run out into an unnecessary length; the Description of *Paradise* would have been faulty, had not the Poet been very particular in it, not only as it is the Scene of the principal Action, but as it is requisite to give us an Idea of that Happiness from which our first Parents fell. The Plan of it is wonderfully beautiful, and formed upon the short Sketch which we have of it, in Holy Writ. *Milton's* Exuberance of Imagination, has pour'd forth such a redundancy of Ornaments on this Seat of Happiness and Innocence, that it would be endless to point out each Particular.

I must not quit this Head, without further observing,

that there is scarce a Speech of *Adam* or *Eve* in the whole Poem, wherein the Sentiments and Allusions are not taken from this their delightful Habitation. The Reader, during their whole Course of Action, always finds himself in the Walks of *Paradise*. In short, as the Criticks have remarked, that in those Poems, wherein Shepherds are Actors, the Thoughts ought always to take a Tincture from the Woods, Fields, and Rivers; so we may observe, that our first Parents seldom lose Sight of their happy Station in any thing they speak or do; and, if the Reader will give me leave to use the Expression, that their Thoughts are always *Paradisical*.

We are in the next place to consider the Machines of the Fourth Book. *Satan* being now within Prospect of *Eden*, and looking round upon the Glories of the Creation, is filled with Sentiments different from those which he discovered whilst he was in Hell. The Place inspires him with Thoughts more adapted to it: He reflects upon the happy Condition from whence he fell, and breaks forth into a Speech that is softened with several transient Touches of Remorse and Self-accusation: But at length he confirms himself in Impenitence, and in his design of drawing Man into his own State of Guilt and Misery. This Conflict of Passions is raised with a great deal of Art, as the opening of his Speech to the Sun is very bold and noble.

*O thou that with surpassing Glory crown'd  
 Look'st from thy Sole Dominion like the God  
 Of this new World, at whose Sight all the Stars  
 Hide their diminish'd heads, to thee I call  
 But with no Friendly Voice, and add thy name,  
 O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams  
 That bring to my remembrance from what State  
 I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphere.*

This Speech is, I think, the finest that is ascribed to *Satan* in the whole Poem. The Evil Spirit afterwards proceeds to make his Discoveries concerning



our first Parents, and to learn after what manner they may be best attacked. His bounding over the Walls of *Paradise*; his sitting in the Shape of a Cormorant upon the Tree of Life, which stood in the Center of it, and over-topp'd all the other Trees of the Garden; his alighting among the Herd of Animals, which are so beautifully represented as playing about *Adam* and *Eve*, together with his transforming himself into different Shapes, in order to hear their Conversation; are Circumstances that give an agreeable Surprise to the Reader, and are devised with great Art, to connect that Series of Adventures in which the Poet has engaged this great Artificer of Fraud.

[The Thought of *Satan*'s Transformation into a Cormorant, and placing himself on the Tree of Life, seems raised upon that Passage in the *Iliad*, where two Deities are described, as perching on the Top of an Oak in the Shape of Vulturs.]

His planting himself at the Ear of *Eve* in the shape [under the Form] of a Toad, in order to produce vain Dreams and Imaginations, is a Circumstance of the same Nature; as his starting up in his own Form is wonderfully fine, both in the Literal Description, and in the Moral which is concealed under it. His Answer upon his being discovered, and demanded to give an Account of himself, are [is] conformable to the Pride and Intrepidity of his Character.

*Know ye not then, said Satan, fill'd with Scorn,  
Know ye not me? ye knew me once no mate  
For you, sitting where you durst not soare;  
Not to know me argues your-selves unknown,  
The lowest of your throng;—*

*Zephon*'s Rebuke, with the Influence it had on *Satan*, is exquisitely Graceful and Moral. *Satan* is afterwards led away to *Gabriel*, the chief of the Guardian Angels, who kept watch in *Paradise*. His disdainful Behaviour on this occasion is so remarkable a Beauty, that the most ordinary Reader cannot but take notice of it.



*Gabriel's* discovering his approach at a distance, is drawn with great strength and liveliness of Imagination.

*O Friends, I hear the tread of nimble Feet  
Hastening this way, and now by glimps discern  
Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade;  
And with them comes a third of Regal Port,  
But faded splendor wan; who by his gait  
And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell,  
Not likely to part hence without contest;  
Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.*

The Conference between *Gabriel* and *Satan* abounds with Sentiments proper for the Occasion, and suitable to the Persons of the two Speakers. *Satan's* cloathing himself with Terror when he prepares for the Combat is truly sublime, and at least equal to *Homer's* Description of Discord celebrated by *Longinus*, or to that of Fame in *Virgil*, who are both represented with their Feet standing upon the Earth, and their Heads reaching above the Clouds.

*While thus he spake, th' Angelic Squadron bright  
Turn'd fiery red, sharpening in mooned Horns  
Their Phalanx, and began to hem him round  
With ported Spears, &c.*

—On th' other Side, *Satan* alarm'd,  
Collecting all his might dilated flood  
Like *Teneriff* or *Atlas* unremov'd.  
His Stature reach'd the Sky, and on his Crest  
Sat horror plum'd;—

I must here take notice, that *Milton* is every where full of Hints, and sometimes literal Translations, taken from the greatest of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets. But this I shall [may] reserve for a Discourse by it self, because I would not break the Thread of these Speculations that are designed for *English* Readers, with such Reflections as would be of no use but to the Learned.

I must however observe in this Place, that the breaking off the Combat between *Gabriel* and *Satan*, by the

hanging out of the Golden Scales in Heaven, is a Refinement upon *Homer's* Thought, who tells us, that before the Battel between *Hector* and *Achilles*, *Jupiter* weighed the Event of it in a pair of Scales. The Reader may see the whole Passage in the 22d *Iliad*.

*Virgil*, before the last decisive Combat, describes *Jupiter* in the same manner, as weighing the Fates of *Turnus* and *Aeneas*. *Milton*, though he fetched this beautiful Circumstance from the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, does not only insert it as a Poetical Embellishment, like the Authors above-mentioned; but makes an artful use of it for the proper carrying on of his Fable, and for the breaking off the Combat between the two Warriors, who were upon the point of engaging. [To this we may further add, that *Milton* is the more justified in this Passage, as we find the same noble Allegory in Holy Writ, where a wicked Prince, {some few Hours before he was assaulted and slain,} is said to have been weigh'd in the Scales and to have been found wanting.]

I must here take Notice under the Head of the Machines, that *Urid's* gliding down to the Earth upon a Sun-beam, with the Poet's Device to make him descend, as well in his return to the Sun, as in his coming from it, is a Prettiness that might have been admired in a little fanciful Poet, but seems below the Genius of *Milton*. The Description of the Host of armed Angels walking their nightly Round in *Paradise* is of another Spirit.

*As evening on the dusky nation lies,  
Drooping the Morn.*————

As that Account of the Harms which our first Parents will to hear them sing in these their Midnight Walks, is altogether Divine and inexprebly moving to the Imagination.

We are in the last place to consider the Persons which *Adam* and *Eve* see in the Fourth Book. The Description of them as they first appear'd to *Satan*, is

exquisitely drawn, and sufficient to make the fallen Angel gaze upon them with all that Astonishment, and those Emotions of Envy, in which he is represented.

*Two of far nobler Shape erect and tall  
God-like erect, with native honour clad  
In naked majesty seem'd lords of all,  
And worthy seem'd, for in their looks divine  
The image of their glorious Maker shon,  
Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure;  
Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd:  
For contemplation he and valour form'd,  
For softness she and sweet attractive Grace;  
He for God only, she for God in him:  
His fair large front, and eye sublime declar'd  
Absolute rule, and Hyacinthin Locks  
Round from his parted forelock many hung  
Clustering, but not beneath his Shoulders broad:  
She as a Vail down to her slender waste  
Her unadorned golden tresses wore  
Dishevel'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd.  
So pass'd they naked on, nor shun'd the Sight  
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:  
So hand in hand they pass'd, the loveliest pair  
That ever since in loves embraces met.*

There is a fine Spirit of Poetry in the Lines which follow, wherein they are describ'd as sitting on a Bed of Flowers by the side of a Fountain, amidst a mixed Assembly of Animals.

The Speeches of these two first Lovers flow equally from Passion and Sincerity. The Professions they make to one another are full of Warmth; but at the same time founded on Truth. In a Word, they are the Gallantries of *Paradise*.

———— *When Adam first of Men* ————  
*Sole Partner and sole part of all these joys,  
Dearer thy self than all;—  
But let us ever praise him, and extol  
His bounty, following our delightful task,*

*To prune those growing plants, and tend these flowers,  
Which were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.  
To whom thus Eve repli'd: O thou for whom  
And from whom I was form'd, flesh of thy flesh,  
And without whom am to no end, my Guide  
And head, what thou hast said is just and right.  
For we to him indeed all praises owe,  
And daily thanks, I chiefly who enjoy  
So far the happier Lot, enjoying thee  
Preeminent by so much odds, while thou  
Like comfort to thy self canst no where find, &c.*

The remaining part of *Eve's* Speech, in which she gives an Account of her self upon her first Creation, and the manner in which she was brought to *Adam*, is I think as beautiful a Passage as any in *Milton*, or perhaps in any other Poet whatsoever. These Passages are all work'd off with so much Art, that they are capable of pleasing the most delicate Reader, without offending the most severe.

*That day I oft remember, when from Sleep, &c.*

A Poet of less Judgment and Invention than this great Author, would have found it very difficult to have filled those [these] tender parts of the Poem with Sentiments proper for a State of Innocence; to have described the warmth of Love, and the Professions of it, without Artifice or Hyperbole; to have made the Man speak the most endearing things, without descending from his natural Dignity, and the Woman receiving them without departing from the Modesty of her Character; in a word, to adjust the Prerogatives of Wisdom and Beauty, and make each appear to the other in its proper Force and Loveliness. This mutual Subordination of the two Sexes is wonderfully kept up in the whole Poem, as particularly in the Speech of *Eve* I have before-mentioned, and upon the Conclusion of it in the following Lines:—

*So spake our general Mother, and with eyes  
Of Conjugal attraction unprov'd,*



*And meek surrender, half embracing lean'd  
On our first father, half her swelling breast  
Naked met his under the flowing Gold  
Of her loose tresses hid; he in delight  
Both of her beauty and submissive charms  
Smil'd with Superiour Love,—*

The Poet adds, that the Devil turn'd away with Envy at the sight of so much Happiness.

We have another View of our First Parents in their Evening Discourses, which is full of pleasing Images and Sentiments suitable to their Condition and Characters. The Speech of *Eve*, in particular, is dress'd up in such a soft and natural Turn of Words and Sentiments, as cannot be sufficiently admired.

I shall close my Reflections upon this Book, with observing the Masterly Transition which the Poet makes to their Evening Worship, in the following Lines:—

*Thus at their shady lodge arriv'd, both stood,  
Both turn'd, and under open Sky ador'd  
The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth and Heav'n,  
Which they beheld, the Moons resplendent Globe,  
And Starry Pole: Thou also mad'st the night,  
Maker omnipotent and thou the Day, &c.*

Most of the Modern Heroic Poets have imitated the Ancients, in beginning a Speech without premising, that the Person said thus or thus; but as it is easie to imitate the Ancients in the Omission of two or three Words, it requires Judgment to do it in such a manner as they shall not be mis'd, and that the Speech may begin naturally without them. There is a fine Instance of this Kind out of *Homer*, in the Twenty-Third Chapter of *Longinus*.



## The SPECTATOR.

— *major rerum mihi nascitur ordo.* Virg.  
*{ A larger Scene of Action is display'd. }* Dryden.

Saturday, March 15, 1712.

**W**E were told in the foregoing Book how the Evil Spirit practis'd upon *Eve* as she lay asleep, in order to inspire her with Thoughts of Vanity, Pride and Ambition. The Author, who shews a wonderful Art throughout his whole Poem, in preparing the Reader for the several Occurrences that arise in it, founds upon the above-mentioned Circumstance the first part of the Fifth Book. *Adam* upon his awaking, finds *Eve* still asleep, with an unusual Discomposure in her Looks. The Posture in which he regards her, is described with a wonderful Tendernefs [not to be express'd\*]†, as the Whisper with which he awakens her, is the softest that ever was conveyed to a Lover's Ears

*His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve  
 With Tresses discompos'd and glowing cheek  
 As through unquiet rest: he on his side  
 Leaning half rais'd, with looks of cordial love  
 Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld  
 Beauty, which whether waking or asleep,  
 Shot forth peculiar Graces; then with voice  
 Mild, as when Zephyrus or Flora breathes,  
 Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus. Awake  
 My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,  
 Heav'n's last best gift, my ever new delight,  
 Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field*

\* See Errata, at the end of No. 369, in the original issue.

*Calls us, we lose the prime, to mark how spring  
Our tended plants, how blows the Citron Grove,  
What drops the Myrrhe, and what the balmie Reed,  
How Nature paints her colours, how the Bee  
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweet.  
Such whispring wak'd her, but with startled Eye,  
On Adam, whom embracing thus she spake.*

*O Sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,  
My Glory, my perfection, glad I see  
Thy face, and morn return'd—*

I cannot but take notice that *Milton*, in his Conferences between *Adam* and *Eve*, had his Eye very frequently upon the Book of *Canticles*, in which there is a noble Spirit of Eastern Poetry, and very often not unlike what we meet with in *Homer*, who is generally placed near the Age of *Solomon*. I think there is no question but the Poet in the preceding Speech remembred those two Passages which are spoken on the like occasion, and fill'd with the same pleasing Images of Nature.

*My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love,  
my fair one, and come away; For lo, the winter is past,  
the rain is over and gone; the Flowers appear on the  
earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the  
Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land. The Fig-tree  
putteth forth her green figs, and the Vines with the tender  
grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one,  
and come away.*

*Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the Field;  
let us get up early to the Vineyards, let us see if the  
Vine flourish, whether the tender Grape appear, and  
the Pomegranates bud forth.*

His preferring the Garden of *Eden* to that

— *Where the Sapiient King  
Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian Spouse,*

shews that the Poet had this delightful Scene in his Mind.

*Eve's Dream* is full of those *high Conceits engendring Pride*, which we are told the Devil endeavoured to instil into her. Of this kind is that part of it where she fancies her self awaken'd by *Adam* in the following beautiful Lines.

*Why sleep'st thou, Eve? now is the pleasant time,  
The cool, the silent, save where silence yields  
To the night-warbling bird, that now awake  
Tunes sweetest his Love-labour'd song; now reigns  
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleasing light  
Shadowy sets off the face of things; in vain  
If none regard; Heav'n wakes with all his eyes,  
Whom to behold but thee, Natures desire,  
In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment  
Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze.*

An injudicious Poet would have made *Adam* talk through the whole Work, in such Sentiments as this [these]. But Flattery and Falshood are not the Courtship of *Milton's Adam*, and cou'd not be heard by *Eve* in her State of Innocence, excepting only in a Dream produced on purpose to taint her Imagination. Other vain Sentiments of the same kind in this relation of her Dream, will be obvious to every Reader. Tho' the Catastrophe of the Poem is finely presaged on this occasion, the Particulars of it are so artfully shadow'd, that they do not anticipate the Story which follows in the Ninth Book. I shall only add, that tho' the Vision it self is founded upon Truth, the Circumstances of it are full of that Wildness and Inconsistency which are natural to a Dream. *Adam*, conformable to his superior Character for Wisdom, instructs and comforts *Eve* upon this occasion.

*So cheer'd he his fair Spouse, and she was cheer'd,  
But silently a gentle tear let fall  
From either eye, and wiped them with her hair;  
Two other precious drops that ready flood,  
Each in their chrysal sluice, he & er they fell*



*Kiss'd as the gracious Signs of sweet remorse  
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.*

The Morning Hymn is written in Imitation of one of those Psalms, where, in the Overflowings of his Gratitude and Praise, the Psalmist calls not only upon the Angels, but upon the most conspicuous parts of the inanimate Creation, to join with him in extolling their Common Maker. Invocations of this Nature fill the Mind with glorious Ideas of God's Works, and awaken that Divine Enthusiasm, which is so natural to Devotion. But if this calling upon the dead parts of Nature, is at all times a proper kind of Worship, it was in a particular manner suitable to our first Parents, who had the Creation fresh upon their Minds, and had not seen the various Dispensations of Providence, nor consequently could be acquainted with those many Topicks of Praise which might afford matter to the Devotions of their Posterity. I need not remark that\* [the] beautiful Spirit of Poetry which runs through this whole Hymn, nor the Holiness of that Resolution with which it concludes.

Having already mentioned those Speeches which are assigned to the Persons in this Poem, I proceed to the Description which the Poet gives us\* of *Raphael*. His Departure from before the Throne, and his Flight thro' the Quires [Choirs] of Angels, is finely imaged. As *Milton* every where fills his Poem with Circumstances that are marvellous and astonishing, he describes the Gate of Heaven as framed after such a manner, that it open'd of it self upon the approach of the Angel who was to pass through it.

——'till at the gate  
*Of Heav'n arriv'd, the gate self-open'd wide,  
On golden Hinges turning, as by work  
Divine the Sovereign Architect had fram'd.*

The Poet here seems to have regarded two or three Passages in the eighteenth *Iliad*, as that in particu-

lar where, speaking of *Vulcan*, *Homer* says, that he had made Twenty *Tripodes*, running on Golden Wheels, which, upon Occasion, might go of themselves to the Assembly of the Gods, and, when there was no more use for them, return again after the same manner. *Scaliger* has rallied *Homer* very severely upon this Point, as *Monf. Dacier* has endeavoured to defend it. I will not pretend to determine, whether in this Particular of *Homer*, the Marvellous does not lose sight of the Probable. As the miraculous Workmanship of *Milton's* Gates is not so extraordinary as this of the *Tripodes*, so I am perswaded he would not have mentioned it, had not he been supported in it by a Passage in the Scripture, which speaks of Wheels in Heaven that had Life in them, and moved of themselves, or stood still, in Conformity with the Cherubims, whom they accompanied.

There is no question but *Milton* had this Circumstance in his Thoughts, because in the following Book he describes the Chariot of the *Messiah* with living Wheels, according to the Plan in *Ezekiel's* Vision.

——— *Forth rush'd with whirlwind sound*  
*The Chariot of Paternal Deity,*  
*Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,*  
*It self insin'g with Spirit*———

I question not but *Bosſu*, and the two *Daciers*, who are for vindicating every thing that is censured in *Homer*, by something Parallel in Holy Writ, would have been very well pleased had they thought of confronting *Vulcan's Tripodes* with *Ezekiel's* Wheels.

*Raphael's* Descent to the Earth, with the Figure of his Person, is represented in very lively Colours. Several of the *French, Italian, and English* Poets have given a loose to their Imaginations in the Description of Angels: But I do not remember to have met with any, so finely drawn and so conformable to the Notions which are given of them in Scripture, as this in *Milton*. After having set him forth in all his Heavenly Plummage,

and represented him as alighting upon the Earth, the Poet concludes his Description with a Circumstance, which is altogether new, and imagined with the greatest Strength of Fancy.

—*Like Maia's Son he flood,  
And shook his plumes, that Heav'nly fragrance fill'd  
The Circuit wide*—

*Raphael's* Reception by the Guardian Angels; his passing through the Wilderness of Sweets; his distant Appearance to *Adam*, have all the Graces that Poetry is capable of bestowing. The Author afterwards gives us a particular Description of *Eve* in her Domestick Employments.

*So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste  
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent,  
What choice to chuse for delicacy best,  
What order, so contriv'd as not to mix  
Tastes, not well joyn'd, inelegant, but bring  
Taste after Taste, upheld with kindest change;  
Beslirs her then &c.*—

Though in this, and other Parts of the same Book, the Subject is only the Housewifery of our First Parent, it is set off with so many pleasing Images and strong Expressions, as make it none of the least agreeable Parts in this Divine Work.

The natural Majesty of *Adam*, and at the same time his submissive Behaviour to the Superiour Being, who had vouchsafed to be his Guest; the solemn Hail which the Angel bestows on the Mother of Mankind, with the Figure of *Eve* ministring at the Table, are Circumstances which deserve to be admir'd.

*Raphael's* Behaviour is every way suitable to the dignity of his Nature, and to that Character of a sociable Spirit, with which the Author has so judiciously introduced him. He had received Instructions to converse with *Adam*, as one Friend converses with another, and to warn him of the Enemy, who was contriving his Destruction: Accordingly he is repre-

presented as sitting down at Table with *Adam*, and eating of the Fruits of *Paradise*. The Occasion naturally leads him to his Discourse on the Food of Angels. After having thus entered into Conversation with Man upon more indifferent Subjects, he warns him of his Obedience, and makes a natural Transition to the History of that fallen Angel, who was employed in the Circumvention of our First Parents.

Had I followed Monsieur *Bossu's* Method in my First Paper on *Milton*, I should have dated the Action of *Paradise Lost* from the Beginning of *Raphael's* Speech in this Book, as he supposes the Action of the *Aeneid* to begin in the second Book of that Poem. I could alledge many Reasons for my drawing the Action of the *Aeneid*, rather from its immediate Beginning in the first Book, than from its remote Beginning in the Second, and shew why I have considered the Sacking of *Troy* as an *Episode*, according to the common Acceptation of that Word. But as this would be a dry un-entertaining Piece of Criticism, and perhaps unnecessary to those who have read my First Paper, I shall not enlarge upon it. Which-ever of the Notions be true, the Unity of *Milton's* Action is preserved according to either of them; whether we consider the Fall of Man in its immediate Beginning, as proceeding from the Resolutions taken in the Infernal Council, or in its more remote Beginning, as proceeding from the First Revolt of the Angels in Heaven. The Occasion which *Milton* assigns for this Revolt, as it is founded on Hints in Holy Writ, and on the Opinion of some great Writers, so it was the most proper that the Poet could have made use of.

The Revolt in Heaven is described with great Force of Imagination [Indignation], and a fine Variety of Circumstances. The Learned Reader cannot but be pleased with the Poet's Imitation of *Homer* in the last of the following Lines.

*At length into the limits of the North  
They came, and Satan took his Royal Seat*



*High on a hill, far blazing, as a mount  
 Rais'd on a Mount, with Pyramids and tow'rs  
 From Diamond quarries hewn, and rocks of Gold  
 The palace of great Lucifer (so call  
 That structure in the Dialect of men  
 Interpreted)——*

*Homer* mentions Persons and Things, which he tells us in the Language of the Gods are call'd by different Names from those they go by in the Language of Men. *Milton* has imitated him with his usual Judgment in this particular place, wherein he has likewise the Authority of Scripture to justify him. The part of *Abdiel*, who was the only Spirit that in this Infinite Host of Angels preserved his Allegiance to his Maker, exhibits to us a noble Moral of religious Singularity. The Zeal of the Seraphim breaks forth in a becoming Warmth of Sentiments and Expressions, as the Character which is given us of him denotes that generous Scorn and Intrepidity which attends Heroic Virtue. The Author, doubtless, designed it as a Pattern to those who live among Mankind in their present State of Degeneracy and Corruption.

*So spake the Seraph Abdiel faithful found,  
 Among the faithless, faithful only he;  
 Among innumerable false, unmov'd,  
 Unshaken, unseduc'd, untterrify'd;  
 His Loyalty he kept, his Love, his Zeal:  
 Nor Number, nor example with him wrought  
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind  
 Though Single. From amidst them forth he pass'd,  
 Long way through hostile Scorn, which he sustain'd  
 Superior, nor of violence fear'd ought;  
 And with retorted Scorn his back he turn'd  
 On those proud Tow'rs to swift Destruction doom'd.*



## The SPECTATOR.

———*vocat in Certamina Divos.*  
*{He calls embattled Deities to Arms.}*

Virg.

Saturday, March 22, 1712.



WE are now entering upon the Sixth Book of *Paradise Lost*, in which the Poet describes the Battel of Angels; having raised his Reader's Expectation, and prepared him for it by several Passages in the preceding Books. I omitted quoting these Passages in my Observations on the former Books, having purposely reserved them for the opening of this, the Subject of which gave occasion to them. The Author's Imagination was so inflamed with this great Scene of Action, that wher-ever he speaks of it, he rises, if possible, above himself. Thus where he mentions Satan in the beginning of his Poem.

———*Him the Almighty Power*  
*Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie,*  
*With hideous ruin and combustion down*  
*To bottomless perdition, there to dwell*  
*In Adamantine Chains and penal fire,*  
*Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.*

We have likewise several noble Hints of it in the Infernal Conference.

*O Prince, O Chief of many throned Powers*  
*That led th' imbattel'd Seraphim to War,*  
*Too well I see and rue the dire event,*  
*That with sad overthrow and foul defeat*  
*Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host*

*In horrible destruction laid thus low.  
 But see the angry victor hath recall'd  
 His Ministers of Vengeance and pursuit  
 Back to the Gates of Heav'n: The Sulphurous hail,  
 Shot after us in Storm, o'erblown hath laid  
 The fiery Surge, that from the precipice  
 Of Heav'n receiv'd us falling, and the thunder  
 Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,  
 Perhaps hath spent his Shafts, and ceases now  
 To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.*

There are several other very Sublime Images on the same Subject in the First Book, as also in the Second.

*What when we fled amain, pursu'd and strook  
 With Heav'n's afflicting Thunder, and besought  
 The deep to shelter us; this Hell then seem'd  
 A refuge from those wounds———*

In short, the Poet never mentions any thing of this Battel but in such Images of Greatness and Terrour, as are suitable to the Subject. Among several others, I cannot forbear quoting that Passage where the Power, who is describ'd as presiding over the Chaos, speaks in the Third Book.

*Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old  
 With faltring speech and visage compos'd,  
 Answer'd, I know thee, stranger, who thou art,  
 That mighty leading Angel, who of late  
 Made head against Heav'n's King, though overthrown.  
 I saw and heard, for such a numerous host  
 Fled not in Silence through the frighted deep  
 With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,  
 Confusion worse confounded; and Heav'n's Gates  
 Pour'd out by Millions her victorious bands  
 Pursuing———*

It required great Pregnancy of Invention, and Strength of Imagination, to fill this Battel with such Circumstances as should raise and astonish the Mind of the Reader; and, at the same time, an exactness

of Judgment to avoid every thing that might appear light or trivial. Those, who look into *Homer*, are surpris'd to find his Battels still rising one above another, and improving in Horrour, to the Conclusion of the *Iliad*. *Milton's* Fight of Angels is wrought up with the same Beauty. It is ushered in with such Signs of Wrath as are suitable to Omnipotence incensed. The First Engagement is carried on under a Cope of Fire, occasion'd by the Flights of innumerable burning Darts and Arrows, which are discharged from either Host. The second Onset is still more terrible, as it is filled with those artificial Thunders, which seem to make the Victory doubtful, and produce a kind of Consternation, even in the Good Angels. This is followed by the tearing up of Mountains and Promontories; till, in the last place, the Messiah comes forth in the fulness of Majesty and Terrour. The Pomp of his Appearance, amidst the Roarings of his Thunders, the Flashes of his Lightnings, and the Noise of his Chariot Wheels, is described with the utmost Flights of Human Imagination.

There is nothing in the first and last Days Engagement, which does not appear natural and agreeable enough to the Ideas most Readers would conceive of a Fight between two Armies of Angels.

The Second Day's Engagement is apt to startle an Imagination, which has not been raised and qualified for such a Description, by the reading of the Ancient Poets, and of *Homer* in particular. It was certainly a very bold Thought in our Author, to ascribe the first use of Artillery to the Rebel Angels. But as such a pernicious Invention may be well supposed to have proceeded from such Authors, so it entered very properly into the Thoughts of that Being, who is all along described as aspiring to the Majesty of his Maker. Such Engines were the only Instruments he could have made use of to imitate those Thunders, that in all Poetry, both Sacred and Prophane, are represented as the Arms of the Almighty. The tearing up



the Hills was not altogether so daring a Thought as the former. We are, in some measure, prepared for such an Incident by the Description of the Gyants War, which we meet with among the Ancient Poets. What still made this Circumstance the more proper for the Poets use, is the Opinion of many learned Men, that the Fable of the Gyants War, which makes so great a Noise in Antiquity, [and gave Birth to the sublimest Description in *Hesiod's* Works,] was an Allegory founded upon this very Tradition of a Fight between the good and bad Angels.

It may, perhaps, be worth while to consider with what Judgment *Milton*, in this Narration, has avoided every thing that is mean and trivial in the Descriptions of the *Latin* and *Greek* Poets; and, at the same time, improved every great Hint which he met with in their Works upon this Subject. *Homer* in that Passage, which *Longinus* has celebrated for its Sublimeness, and which *Virgil* and *Ovid* have copied after him, tells us, that the Gyants threw *Offa* upon *Olympus*, and *Pelion* upon *Offa*. He adds an Epithet to *Pelion* (εἰνοσίφυλλον) which very much swells the Idea, by bringing up to the Reader's Imagination all the Woods that grew upon it. There is further a great Beauty in his singling out by Name these three remarkable Mountains so well known to the *Greeks*. This last is such a Beauty as the Scene of *Milton's* War could not possibly furnish him with. *Claudian* in his Fragment upon the Gyants War, has given full Scope to that wildness of Imagination which was natural to him. He tells us, that the Gyants tore up whole Islands by the Roots, and threw them at the Gods. He describes one of them in particular taking up *Lemnos* in his Arms, and whirling it to the Skies, with all *Vulcan's* Shop in the midst of it. Another tears up Mount *Ida*, with the River *Enipeus* which ran down the sides of it; but the Poet, not content to describe him with this Mountain upon his Shoulders, tells us that the River flowed down his Back, as he held it up in that

Posture. It is visible to every judicious Reader, that such Ideas favour more of Burlesque than of the Sublime. They proceed from a Wantonness of Imagination, and rather divert the Mind than astonish it. *Milton* has taken every thing that is Sublime in these several Passages, and composes out of them the following great Image.

*From their Foundations loosning to and fro  
They pluck'd the seated Hills with all their load,  
Rocks, Waters, Woods, and by the shaggy tops  
Up-lifting bore them in their Hands:—*

We have the full Majesty of *Homer* in this short Description, improved by the Imagination of *Claudian*, without its Puerilities.

I need not point out the Description of the fallen Angels, seeing the Promontories hanging over their Heads in such a dreadful manner, with the other numberless Beauties in this Book, which are so conspicuous, that they cannot escape the Notice of the most ordinary Reader.

There are indeed so many wonderful strokes of Poetry in this Book, and such a variety of Sublime Ideas, that it would have been impossible to have given them a place within the bounds of this Paper. Besides that, I find it in a great measure done to my Hand, at the end of my Lord *Roscommon's* Essay on Translated Poetry. I shall refer my Reader thither for some of the Master-Strokes in the Sixth Book of *Paradise Lost*, tho' at the same time there are many others which that noble Author has not taken notice of.

*Milton*, notwithstanding the Sublime Genius he was Master of, has in this Book drawn to his Assistance all the helps he could meet with among the Ancient Poets. The Sword of *Michael*, which makes so great an havock among the bad Angels, was given him, we are told, out of the Armory of God.

—But the Sword  
Of *Michael* from the Armory of God

*Was giv'n him temper'd fo, that neither keen  
Nor solid might resist that edge: it met  
The Sword of Satan with sleep force to smite  
Descending, and in half cut sheere,——*

This Passage is a Copy of that in *Virgil*, wherein the Poet tells us, that the Sword of *Æneas*, which was given him by a Deity, broke into pieces the Sword of *Turnus*, which came from a Mortal Forge: As the Moral in this place is Divine, so by the way we may observe, that the bestowing on a Man who is favour'd by Heaven such an Allegorical Weapon, is very conformable to the old Eastern way of Thinking. Not only *Homer* has made use of it, but we find the *Jewish* Hero in the Book of *Maccabees*, who had fought the Battels of the chosen People with so much Glory and Success, receiving in his Dream a Sword from the hand of the Prophet *Jeremy* [*Jeremiah*]. The following Passage, wherein *Satan* is described as wounded by the Sword of *Michael*, is in imitation of *Homer*.

*The girding Sword with discontinuous wound  
Pass'd through him, but th' Ethereal substance closed  
Not long divisible, and from the gash  
A stream of Nectarous humour issuing flow'd  
Sanguin, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,  
And all his Armour slain'd——*

*Homer* tells us in the same manner, that upon *Diomedes* wounding the Gods, there flow'd from the Wound an *Ichor*, or pure kind of Blood, which was not bred from Mortal Viands; and that tho' the Pain was exquisitely great, the Wound soon closed up and healed in those Beings who are vested with Immortality.

I question not but *Milton* in his Description of his furious *Moloch* flying from the Battel, and bellowing with the Wound he had receiv'd, had his Eye upon *Mars* in the *Iliad*, who upon his being wounded, is represented as retiring out of the Fight, and making an Outcry louder than that of a whole Army when it





the contending Armies, and lifts up his Voice in such a manner, that it is heard distinctly amidst all the Shouts and Confusion of the Fight. *Jupiter* at the same time Thunders over their Heads; while *Neptune* raises such a Tempest, that the whole Field of Battel, and all the tops of the Mountains shake about them, The Poet tells us, that *Pluto* himself, whose Habitation was in the very Center of the Earth, was so a[f]frighted at the shock, that he leapt from his Throne. *Homer* afterwards describes *Vulcan* as pouring down a Storm of Fire upon the River *Xanthus*, and *Minerva* as throwing a Rock at *Mars*; who, he tells us, covered seven Acres in his Fall.

As *Homer* has introduced into his Battel of the Gods every thing that is great and terrible in Nature, *Milton* has filled his Fight of Good and Bad Angels with all the like Circumstances of Horror. The Shout of Armies, the Rattling of Brazen Chariots, the Hurling of Rocks and Mountains, the Earthquake, the Fire, the Thunder, are all of them employed to lift up the Reader's Imagination, and give him a suitable Idea of so great an Action. With what Art has the Poet represented the whole Body of the Earth trembling, even before it was created.

*All Heaven refounded, and had Earth been then  
All Earth had to its Center shook——*

In how sublime and just a manner does he afterwards describe the whole Heaven shaking under the Wheels of the Messiah's Chariot, with that Exception to the Throne of God?

*———Under his burning Wheels  
The steadfast Empyrean shook throughout,  
All but the Throne it self of God———*

Notwithstanding the Messiah appears cloathed with so much Terroure and Majesty, the Poet has still found means to make his Readers conceive an Idea of him, beyond what he himself was able to describe.

*Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checkt  
His thunder in mid volley, for he meant  
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven.*

In a word, *Milton's* Genius which was so great in it self, and so strengthened by all the helps of Learning, appears in this Book every way Equal to his Subject[s], which was the most Sublime that could enter into the Thoughts of a Poet. As he knew all the Arts of affecting the Mind, had he not given [he knew it was necessary to give] it certain resting places and Opportunities of recovering it self from time to time : He has [therefore] with great Address intersperfed several Speeches, Reflections, Similitudes, and the like Reliefs to diversifie his Narration, and ease the Attention of his [the] Reader, that he might come fresh to his great Action, and by such a Contrast of Ideas, have a more lively taste of the nobler parts of his Description.

Addison corrected and re-corrected this last sentence. The first and last readings, as in the original and second editions, are as above. The intermediate reading, according to the *Errata* in No. 369, of the original issue, is as follows :

As he knew all the Arts of affecting the Mind, he has given it certain resting places and Opportunities of recovering it self from time to time : several Speeches, Reflections, Similitudes, and the like Reliefs being intersperfed, to diversifie his Narration, and ease the attention of his Reader.



# The SPECTATOR.

——— *Vt his exordia primis*  
*Omnia, & ipse tener Mundi concreverit orbis.*  
*Tum durare solum, & discludere Nerea ponto.*  
*Cæperit, & rerum paullatim sumere formas.* Virg.  
 { *He sung the secret Seeds of Nature's Frame;*  
*How Seas, and Earth, and Air, and active Flame,*  
*Fell thro' the mighty Void, and in their Fall*  
*Were blindly gather'd in this goodly Ball.*  
*The tender Soil then stiff'ning by degrees*  
*Shut from the bounded Earth the bounding Seas.*  
*Then Earth and Ocean various Forms disclose,*  
*And a new Sun to the new World arose.* Dryden. }

Saturday, March 29. 1712.

**L**ONGINUS has observed, that there may be a Loftiness in Sentiments, where there is no Passion, and brings Instances out of Ancient Authors to support this his Opinion. The Pathetick, as that great Critick observes, may animate and inflame the Sublime, but is not essential to it. Accordingly, as he further remarks, we very often find that those, who excell most in stirring up the Passions, very often want the Talent of Writing in the Great and Sublime manner; and so on the contrary. *Milton* has shewn himself a Master in both these ways of Writing. The Seventh Book, which we are now entering upon, is an Instance of that Sublime, which is not mixt and work'd up with Passion. The Author appears in a kind of composed and sedate Majesty; and tho' the Sentiments do not give so great [an] Emotion as those in the former Book, they abound with as magnificent Ideas.

The Sixth Book, like a troubled Ocean, represents Greatness in Confusion; the Seventh affects the Imagination like the Ocean in a Calm, and fills the Mind of the Reader without producing in it any thing like Tumult or Agitation.

The Critick abovementioned, among the Rules which he lays down for succeeding in the Sublime way of Writing, proposes to his Reader, that he should imitate the most celebrated Authors who have gone before him, and have been engaged in Works of the same nature; as in particular that if he writes on a Poetical Subject, he should consider how *Homer* would have spoken on such an Occasion. By this means one great Genius often catches the Flame from another, and writes in his Spirit, without copying servilely after him. There are a thousand Shining Passages in *Virgil*, which have been lighted up by *Homer*.

*Milton*, though his own natural Strength of Genius was capable of furnishing out a perfect Work, has doubtless very much raised and ennobled his Conceptions, by such an Imitation as that which *Longinus* has recommended.

In this Book, which gives us an Account of the Six Days Works, the Poet received but very few Assistances from Heathen Writers, who were Strangers to the Wonders of Creation. But as there are many Glorious Stroaks of Poetry upon this Subject in Holy Writ, the Author has numberless Allusions to them through the whole Course of this Book. The great Critick, I have before mentioned, tho' an Heathen, has taken notice of the Sublime manner in which the Law-giver of the *Jews* has described the Creation in the first Chapter of *Genesis*; and there are many other Passages in Scripture, which rise up to the same Majesty, where this Subject is toucht upon. *Milton* has shewn his Judgment very remarkably, in making use of such of these as were proper for his Poem, and in duly qualifying those high Strains of Eastern Poetry,



which were suited to Readers whose Imaginations were fet to an higher pitch than those of colder Climates.

*Adam's Speech to the Angel*, wherein he desires an Account of what had passed within the Regions of Nature before his [the] Creation, is very great and solemn. The following Lines, in which he tells him that the Day is not too far spent for him to enter upon such a Subject, are exquisite in their kind.

*And the Great light of day yet wants to run  
Much of his race through sleep, suspens in Heav'n  
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears,  
And longer will delay to hear thee tell  
His Generation, &c.——*

The Angel's encouraging our first Parent[s] in a modest pursuit after Knowledge, with the Causes which he assigns for the Creation of the World, are very just and beautiful. The Messiah, by whom, as we are told in Scripture, the Heavens were made, goes [comes\*] forth in the Power of his Father, surrounded with an Host of Angels, and cloathed with such a Majesty as becomes his entering upon a Work, which, according to our Conceptions, looks like [appears] the utmost exertion of Omnipotence. What a beautiful Description has our Author raised upon that Hint in one of the Prophets. *And behold there came four Chariots out from between two Mountains, and the Mountains were Mountains of Brass.*

*About his Chariot numberless were pour'd  
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,  
And virtues, winged Spirits, and Chariots wing'd,  
From the Armoury of God, where stand of old  
Myriads between two brazen mountains lodg'd  
Against a solemn day, harness'd at hand;  
Celestial Equipage; and now came forth  
Spontaneous, for within them spirit liv'd  
Attendant on their lord: Heav'n open'd wide  
Her ever-during Gates, Harmonious sound  
On golden Hinges moving——*

I have before taken notice of these Chariots of

God, and of these Gates of Heaven, and shall here only add, that *Homer* gives us the same Idea of the latter as opening of themselves, tho' he afterwards takes off from it, by telling us, that the Hours first of all removed those prodigious heaps of Clouds which lay as a Barrier before them.

I do not know any thing in the whole Poem more Sublime than the Description which follows, where the Messiah is represented at the head of his Angels, as looking down into the *Chaos*, calming its Confusion, riding into the midst of it, and drawing the first Outline of the Creation.

*On Heav'nly ground they stood, and from the shore  
They view'd the vast immeasurable Abyss  
Outragious as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild,  
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds  
And surging waves, as Mountains to assault  
Heav'n's height, and with the Center mix the Pole.*

*Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou Deep, Peace,  
Said then th' Omnific word, your Discord end:*

*Nor said, but on the wings of Cherubim  
Up-listed, in Paternal Glory rode  
Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;  
For Chaos heard his voice: him all his train  
Follow'd in bright Procession to behold  
Creation, and the wonders of his might.  
Then said the fervid wheels, and in his hand  
He took the golden Compasses, prepared  
In Gods eternal Store, to circumscribe  
This Universe, and all created things:  
One foot he Center'd, and the other turn'd,  
Round through the vast profundity obscure,  
And said, thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,  
This be thy just Circumference, O World.*

The Thought of the Golden Compasses is conceiv'd altogether in *Homer's* Spirit, and is a very noble Incident in this wonderful Description. *Homer*, when he speaks of the Gods, ascribes to them several Arms and

Instruments with the same greatness of Imagination. Let the Reader only peruse the Description of *Minerva's Aegis*, or Buckler, in the Fifth Book, with her Spear, which could [would] overturn whole Squadrons, and her Helmet, that was sufficient to cover an Army, drawn out of an hundred Cities: The Golden Compasses, in the above-mentioned Passage appear a very natural Instrument in the Hand of him, whom *Plato* somewhere calls the Divine Geometrician. As Poetry delights in cloathing abstracted Ideas in Allegories and sensible Images, we find a magnificent Description of the Creation form'd after the same manner in one of the Prophets, wherein he describes the Almighty Architect as measuring the Waters in the hollow of his Hand, meting out the Heavens with his Span, comprehending the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, weighing the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance. Another of them describing the Supreme Being in this great Work of Creation, represents him as laying the Foundations of the Earth, and stretching a Line upon it. And in another place as garnishing the Heavens, stretching out the North over the empty place, and hanging the Earth upon nothing. This last noble Thought *Milton* has express'd in the following Verse:

*And Earth self-balan'd on her Center hung.*

The Beauties of Description in this Book lie so very thick, that it is impossible to enumerate them in this Paper. The Poet has employed on them the whole Energy of our Tongue. The several great Scenes of the Creation rise up to view one after another, in such a manner that the Reader seems present at this wonderful Work, and to assist among the Quires [Choirs] of Angels, who are the Spectators of it. How glorious is the Conclusion of the first Day.

——— *Thus was the first day Ev'n and Morn.  
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung  
By the Celestial Quires, when Orient light*

*Exhaling first from Darknefs they beheld ;  
Birth-day of Heav'n and Earth ; with joy and shout  
The hollow universal Orb they fill'd.*

We have the same elevation of Thought in the third Day ; when the Mountains were brought forth, and the Deep was made.

*Immediately the mountains huge appear  
Emergent, and their broad bare backs up heave  
Into the Clouds, their tops ascend the Sky.  
So high as heav'd the tumid hills, so low  
Down sunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,  
Capacious bed of Waters——*

We have also the rising of the whole vegetable World described in this Day's Work, which is filled with all the Graces that other Poets have lavished on their Descriptions of the Spring, and leads the Reader's Imagination into a Theatre equally surprising and beautiful.

The several Glories of the Heav'ns make their appearance on the Fourth Day.

*First in his East the glorious lamp was seen  
Regent of day, and all th' Horizon round  
Invested with bright rays, jocond to run  
His Longitude through Heav'ns high rode : the Gray  
Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danced  
Shedding sweet influence : less bright the moon,  
But opposite in level'd West was set,  
His Mirror, with full face borrowing her light  
From him, for other light she needed none  
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps  
Till night ; then in the East her turn she shines  
Revolv'd on Heav'ns great Axle, and her reign  
With thousand lesser lights dividuall holds,  
With thousand thousand stars, that then appear'd  
Spangling the Hemisphere——*

One would wonder how the Poet could be so concise in his Description of the Six Days Works, as to



comprehend them within the bounds of an Epifode, and at the fame time fo particular, as to give us a lively Idea of them. This is ftill more remarkable in his Account of the Fifth and Sixth Day[s], in which he has drawn out to our view the whole Animal Creation, from the Reptil to the Behemoth. As the Lion and the Leviathan are two of the nobleft Productions in this World of living Creatures, the Reader will find a moft exquisite Spirit of Poetry, in the Account which our Author gives us of them. The Sixth Day concludes with the Formation of Man, upon which the Angel takes occafion, as he did after the Battel in Heaven, to remind *Adam* of his Obedience, which was the principal Defign of this his Vifit.

The Poet afterwards represents the Meffiah returning into Heaven, and taking a Survey of his great Work. There is fomething inexpressibly Sublime in this Part of the Poem, where the Author describes that great Period of Time, fill'd with fo many Glorious Circumftances; when the Heavens and the Earth were finifhed; when the Meffiah afcended up in Triumph through the Everlafting Gates; when he look'd down with pleafure upon his new Creation; when every Part of Nature feemed to rejoice in its Exiftence; when the Morning Stars fang together, and all the Sons of God fhouted for Joy.

*So Ev'n and Morn accomplifh'd the Sixth day:  
Yet not till the Creator from his Work  
Defifting, tho' unwearied, up return'd,  
Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns his high abode,  
Thence to behold this new created world  
Th' addition of his empire; how it shew'd  
In profpect from his throne, how good, how fair  
Answering his great Idea. Up he rode  
Follow'd with acclamation and the Sound  
Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tun'd  
Angelic Harmonies: the earth, the air  
Refounded, (thou remember'ft, for thou heard'ft)*

*The Heavens and all the Constellations rung,  
 The Planets in their Station list'ning flood,  
 While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.  
 Open, ye everlasting gates, they sung,  
 Open, ye Heav'ns, your living doors, let in  
 The great Creator from his work return'd  
 Magnificent, his six days work, a World.*

I cannot conclude this Book upon the Creation, without mentioning a Poem which has lately appeared under that Title. The Work was undertaken with so good an Intention, and is executed with so great a Mastery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble Productions in our *English* Verse. The Reader cannot but be pleased to find the Depths of Philosophy enlivened with all the Charms of Poetry, and to see so great a Strength of Reason, amidst so beautiful a Redundancy of [the] Imagination. The Author has shewn us that Design in all the Works of Nature, which necessarily leads us to the Knowledge of its first Cause. In short, he has illustrated, by numberless and incontestable Instances, that Divine Wisdom, which the Son of *Sirach* has so nobly ascribed to the Supreme Being in his Formation of the World, when he tells us, that *He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his Works.*†

† In the advertisements immediately under this paragraph in the Original issue is the following:—

Lately Publish'd,

Creation. A Philosophical Poem. Demonstrating the Existence and Providence of a God. In Seven Books. By Sir Richard Blackmore, Knt., M. D., and Fellow of the College of Physicians in London, &c. &c.



## The SPECTATOR.

*Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacious altæ  
Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera posset.  
Natus homo est*

Ov. Met.

*{ A Creature of a more exalted kind  
Was wanting yet, and then was Man design'd;  
Conscious of Thought, of more capacious Breast,  
For Empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest. Dryden. }*

*Saturday, April 5, 1712.*

**T**HE Accounts which *Raphael* gives of the Battel of Angels, and the Creation of the World, have in them those Qualifications which the Criticks judge requisite to an Epifode. They are nearly related to the principal Action, and have a juſt Connection with the Fable.

The Eighth Book opens with a beautiful Deſcription of the Impreſſion which this Diſcourſe of the Arch-angel made on our firſt Parent. *Adam* afterwards, by a very natural Curioſity, enquires concerning the Motions of thoſe Celeſtial Bodies which make the moſt glorious Appearance among the fix Days Works. The Poet here, with a great deal of Art, repreſents *Eve* as withdrawing from this part of their Converſation to Amuſements that ſeem more ſuitable to her Sex. He well knew, that the Epifode in this Book, which is filled with *Adam's* Account of his Paſſion and Eſteem for *Eve*, would have been improper for her hearing, and has therefore deviſed very juſt and beautiful Reaſons for her Retiring.

*So ſpake our Sire, and by his Countenance ſeem'd  
Entring on ſtudious thoughts abſtruſe: which Eve  
Perceiving where ſhe ſat retired in ſight,  
With lowlineſs Maſtlick from her Seat*

*And Grace that won who saw to wish her stay,  
 Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers  
 To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom,  
 Her Nursery; they at her coming sprung,  
 And toucht by her fair tendance gladlier grew.  
 Yet went she not, as not with such discourse  
 Delighted, or not capable her ear  
 Of what was high: Such pleasure she reserv'd  
 Adam relating, she sole Auditress;  
 Her Husband the relater she preferr'd  
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask  
 Chose rather: he, she knew, would intermix  
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute  
 With conjugal Caresses: from his Lip  
 Not words alone pleas'd her. O when meet now  
 Such pairs in Love, and mutual honour join'd?*

The Angel's returning a doubtful Answer to *Adam's* Enquiries, was not only proper for the Moral Reason which the Poet assigns, but because it would have been highly absurd to have given the Sanction of an Archangel to any particular System of Philosophy. The chief Points in the *Ptolemaic* and *Copernican* Hypothesis are described with great Conciseness and Perspicuity, and at the same time dressed in very pleasing and Poetical Images.

*Adam*, to detain the Angel, enters afterwards upon his own History, and relates to him the Circumstances in which he found himself upon his Creation; as also his Conversation with his Maker, and his first Meeting with *Eve*. There is no part of the Poem more apt to raise the attention of the Reader, than this Discourse of our great Ancestor; as nothing can be more surprising and delightful to us, than to hear the Sentiments that arose in the first Man while he was yet new and fresh from the hands of his Creator. The Poet has interwoven every thing which is delivered upon *this Subject* in Holy Writ with so many beautiful Imaginations of his own, that nothing can be conceived



more just and natural than this whole Episode. As our Author knew this Subject could not but be agreeable to his Reader, he would not throw it into the relation of the six Days Works, but reserved it for a distinct Episode, that he might have an opportunity of expatiating upon it more at large. Before I enter on this part of the Poem, I cannot but take notice of two shining Passages in the Dialogue between *Adam* and the Angel. The first is that wherein our Ancestor gives an Account of the Pleasure he took in conversing with him, which contains a very noble Moral.

*For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n,  
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear  
Than fruits of Palm-tree pleasantest to thirst  
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour  
Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,  
Tho' pleasant, but thy words with Grace divine  
Imbu'd, bring to their sweetness no satiety.*

The other I shall mention is that in which the Angel gives a reason why he should be glad to hear the Story *Adam* was about to relate.

*For I that day was absent, as befell,  
Bound on a Voyage uncouth and obscure,  
Far on excursion towards the Gates of Hell;  
Squar'd in full Legion (such command we had)  
To see that none thence issued forth a Spy,  
Or enemy, while God was in his work,  
Lest he incens'd at such eruption bold,  
Destruction with Creation might have mix'd.*

There is no question but our Poet drew the Image in what follows from that in *Virgil's* Sixth Book, where *Aeneas* and the Sibyl stand before the *Adamantine* Gates which are there describ'd as shut upon the place of Torments, and listen to the Groans, the clank of Chains, and the noise of Iron Whips that were heard in those Regions of Pain and Sorrow.

—————*Fast we found, fast shut  
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong;*

*But long e'er our approaching heard within  
Noise, other than the sound of Dance or Song,  
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.*

Adam then proceeds to give an Account of his Condition and Sentiments immediately after his Creation. How agreeably does he represent the posture in which he found himself, the beautiful Landskip that surrounded him, and the gladness of Heart which grew up in him on that occasion.

— *As new waked from foundest sleep  
Soft on the flow'ry herb I found me laid  
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the Sun  
Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.  
Streight toward Heav'n my wondering eyes I turn'd.  
And gaz'd a while the ample Sky, 'till rais'd  
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung  
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright  
Stood on my feet; about me round I saw  
Hill, Dale, and shady woods and sunny plains,  
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these  
Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew,  
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd:  
With fragrance, and with Joy my heart overflow'd.*

Adam is afterwards described as surpriz'd at his own Existence, and taking a Survey of himself, and of all the Works of Nature. He likewise is represented as discovering by the Light of Reason, that he and every thing about him must have been the effect of some Being infinitely good and powerful, and that this Being had a Right to his Worship and Adoration. His first address to the Sun, and to those parts of the Creation which made the most distinguished Figure, is very natural and amusing to the Imagination.

— *Thou Sun, said I, fair Light,  
And thou enlight'ned earth, so fresh and gay,  
Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods and Plains,  
And ye that live and move, fair creatures tell,  
Tell if you saw, how came I thus, how here?*

His next Sentiment, when upon his first going to Sleep he fancies himself losing his Existence, and falling away into nothing, can never be sufficiently admired. His Dream, in which he still preserves the Consciousness of his Existence, together with his removal into the Garden which was prepared for his Reception, are also Circumstances finely imagined, and grounded upon what is delivered in Sacred Story.

These and the like wonderful Incidents, in this Part of the Work, have in them all the Beauties of Novelty, at the same time that they have all the Graces of Nature. They are such as none but a great Genius could have thought of, though, upon the perusal of them, they seem to rise of themselves from the Subject of which he treats. In a Word, though they are natural they are not obvious, which is the true Character of all fine Writing.

The Impression which the Interdiction of the Tree of Life left in the Mind of our first Parent, is described with great Strength and Judgment, as the Image of the several Beasts and Birds passing in review before him is very beautiful and lively.

—————*Each Bird and Beast behold  
Approaching two and two, these cowering low  
With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his Wing:  
I nam'd them as they pass'd*—————

Adam, in the next place, describes a Conference which he held with his Maker upon the Subject of Solitude. The Poet here represents the Supreme Being, as making an Essay of his own Work, and putting to the tryal that reasoning Faculty, with which he had endued his Creature. Adam urges, in this divine Colloquy, the Impossibility of his being happy, tho' he was the Inhabitant of *Paradise*, and Lord of the whole Creation, without the Conversation and Society of some rational Creature, who should partake those Blessings with him. This Dialogue, which is supported chiefly by the Beauty of the Thoughts, without other Poetical

Ornaments, is as fine a part as any in the whole Poem: The more the Reader examines the justness and delicacy of its Sentiments, the more he will find himself pleas'd with it. The Poet has wonderfully preserv'd the Character of Majesty and Condescension in the Creator, and at the same time that of Humility and Adoration in the Creature, as particularly in those beautiful Lines.

*Thus I presumptuous ; and the Vision bright,  
As with a smile more brightned, thus reply'd. &c.*

*———— I with leave of speech implor'd  
And humble deprecation thus reply'd,  
Let not my Words offend thee, Heav'nly power,  
My maker, be propitious while I speak &c.*

Adam then proceeds to give an account of his second Sleep, and of the Dream in which he beheld the Formation of *Eve*. The new Passion that was awakened in him at the sight of her is touched very finely.

*Under his forming hands a Creature grew,  
Manlike, but different Sex ; so lovely fair,  
That what seem'd fair in all the World seem'd now  
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd,  
And in her looks ; which from that time infus'd  
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,  
And into all things from her air inspir'd  
The spirit of Love and amorous delight.*

Adam's Distress upon losing sight of this beautiful Phantom, with his Exclamations of Joy and Gratitude at the Discovery of a real Creature, who resembled the Apparition which had been presented to him in his Dream ; the Approaches he makes to her, and his manner of Courtship, are all laid together in a most exquisite Propriety of Sentiments.

Tho' this part of the Poem is work'd up with great Warmth and Spirit, the Love, which is described in it, is every way suitable to a State of Innocence. If the Reader compares the Description which *Adam* here gives of his leading *Eve* to the Nuptial Bower, with



that which Mr. *Dryden* has made on the same Occasion in a Scene of his *Fall of Man*, he will be sensible of the great Care which *Milton* took to avoid all Thoughts on so delicate a Subject, that might be offensive to Religion or Good-manners. The Sentiments are chaste, but not cold, and convey to the Mind Ideas of the most transporting Passion, and of the greatest Purity. What a noble Mixture of Rapture and Innocence has the Author joined together, in the Reflection which *Adam* makes on the Pleasures of Love, compared to those of Sense.

*Thus have I told thee all my State, and brought  
My Story to the Sum of earthly blifs  
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find  
In all things else delight indeed, but such  
As us'd or not, works in the mind no change,  
Nor vehement desire; these delicacies  
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits and flowers.  
Walks, and the melody of Birds; but here  
Far otherwise, transported I behold,  
Transported touch; here passion first I felt,  
Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else  
Superiour and unmov'd, here only weak  
Against the Charm of beauties powerfull glance.  
Or nature fail'd in me, and left some part  
Not proof enough such object to sustain,  
Or from my side subdueling, took perhaps  
More than enough; at least on her bestow'd  
Too much of ornament, in outward shew  
Elaborate, of inward less exact.*

*When I approach  
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems  
And in herself compleat, so well to know  
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,  
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best:  
All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
Degraded: Wisdom in discourse with her  
Loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shews;*

*Authority and reason on her wait,  
As one intended first, not after made  
Occasionally; and to consummate all,  
Greatness of mind and nobleness their Seat  
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe  
About her, as a guard Angelick plac'd.*

These Sentiments of Love, in our first Parent, gave the Angel such an Insight into Humane Nature, that he seems apprehensive of the Evils which might befall the Species in general, as well as *Adam* in particular, from the Excess of this Passion. He therefore fortifies him against it by timely Admonitions; which very artfully prepare the Mind of the Reader for the Occurrences of the next Book, where the Weakness of which *Adam* here gives such distant discoveries, brings about that fatal Event which is the Subject of the Poem. His Discourse, which follows the gentle Rebuke he receiv'd from the Angel, shews that his Love, however violent it might appear, was still founded in Reason, and consequently not improper for *Paradise*.

*Neither her outside form, or fair, nor ought  
In proportion common to all kinds  
(Though higher of the general hea by far,  
And with mysterious ornaments I deem)  
So much delights me as thy generous soul,  
That thou shouldst descend to such daily tears  
From all her words and actions mine with love  
And sweet complacency, which declare unfeign'd  
Union of mind, or in us both one Soul;  
Harmony to behold in wedded pair.*

*Adam's* Speech, at parting with the Angel, has in it a Veneration and Gratitude agreeable to an Inferior Nature, and at the same time a certain Dignity and Greatness, suitable to the Father of Mankind in his State of Innocence.

## The SPECTATOR.

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— *In te omnis domus inclinata recumbit.* Virg.

{ *On thee the Fortunes of our House depend.* }

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*Saturday, April 12. 1712.*

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IF we look into the three great Heroic Poems which have appear'd in the World, we may observe that they are built upon very flight Foundations. *Homer* lived near 300 Years after the *Trojan* War, and, as the Writing of History was not then in use among the *Greeks*, we may very well suppose, that the Tradition of *Achilles* and *Ulysses* had brought down but very few Particulars to his Knowledge, tho' there is no question but he has wrought into his two Poems such of their remarkable Adventures as were still talked of among his Contemporaries.

The Story of *Aeneas*, on which *Virgil* founded his Poem, was likewise very bare of Circumstances, and by that means afforded him an Opportunity of embellishing it with Fiction, and giving a full Range to his own Invention. We find, however, that he has interwoven, in the course of his Fable, the principal Particulars, which were generally believed among the *Romans*, of *Aeneas* his Voyage and Settlement in *Italy*.

The Reader may find an Abridgment of the whole Story, as collected out of the Ancient Historians, and as it was received among the *Romans*, in *Dionysius Halicarnassensis*.

Since none of the Criticks have considered *Virgil's* Fable, with relation to this History of *Aeneas*, it may

not, perhaps, be amiss to examine it in this Light, so far as regards my present Purpose. Whoever looks into the Abridgment abovementioned, will find that the Character of *Aeneas* is filled with Piety to the Gods, and a superstitious Observation of Prodigies, Oracles, and Predictions. *Virgil* has not only preserved this Character in the Person of *Aeneas*, but has given a place in his Poem to those particular Prophecies which he found recorded of him in History and Tradition. The Poet took the matters of Fact as they came down to him, and circumstanced them after his own manner, to make them appear the more natural, agreeable or surprizing. I believe very many Readers have been shocked at that ludicrous Prophecy, which one of the *Harpyes* pronounces to the *Trojans* in the Third Book, namely, that before they had built their Intended City, they should be reduced by Hunger to eat their very Tables. But, when they heard that this was one of the Circumstances that had been transmitted to the *Romans* in the History of *Aeneas*, they will think the Poet did very well in taking notice of it. The Historian abovementioned, acquaints us that a Prophetess had foretold *Aeneas*, that he should take his Voyage Westward, till his Companions should eat their Tables, and that accordingly, upon his landing in *Italy*, as they were eating their Flesh upon Cakes of Bread, for want of other Conveniences, they afterwards fed on the Cakes themselves, upon which one of the Company said merrily, 'We are eating our Tables.' They immediately took the Hint, says the Historian, and concluded the Prophecy to be fulfilled. As *Virgil* did not think it proper to omit so material a Particular in the History of *Aeneas*, it may be worth while to consider with how much Judgment he has qualified it, and taken off every thing that might have appeared improper for a Passage in an Heroic Poem. The Prophetess who foretells it is an hungry *Harpy*, as the Person who discovers it is young *Ascanius*.



*Heus etiam menfas consumimus inquit Iulius!*

Such an Observation, which is beautiful in the mouth of a Boy, would have been ridiculous from any other of the Company. I am apt to think that the changing of the *Trojan* Fleet into Water-Nymphs, which is the most violent Machine of the whole *Æneid*, and has given Offence to several Critics, may be accounted for the same way. *Virgil* himself, before he begins that Relation, premises that what he was going to tell appeared incredible, but that it was justified by Tradition. What further confirms me that this change of the Fleet was a celebrated Circumstance in the History of *Æneas*, is, that *Ovid* has given a place to the same *Metamorphosis* in his account of the Heathen Mythology.

None of the Criticks, I have met with, having considered the Fable of the *Æneid* in this Light, and taken notice how the Tradition, on which it was founded, authorizes those Parts in it which appear the most Exceptionable; I hope the Length of this Reflection will not make it unacceptable to the curious Part of my Readers.

The History, which was the Basis of *Milton's* Poem, is still shorter than either that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*. The Poet has likewise taken care to insert every Circumstance of it in the Body of his Fable. The Ninth Book, which we are here to consider, is raised upon that brief Account in Scripture, wherein we are told that the Serpent was more subtle than any Beast of the Field, that he tempted the Woman to eat of the Forbidden Fruit, that she was overcome by this Temptation, and that *Adam* followed her Example. From these few Particulars *Milton* has formed one of the most Entertaining Fables that Invention ever produced. He has disposed of these several Circumstances among so many beautiful and natural Fictions of his own, that his whole Story looks only like a Comment upon sacred Writ, or rather seems to be a full

and compleat Relation of what the other is only an Epitome. I have insisted the longer on this Consideration, as I look upon the Disposition and Contrivance of the Fable to be the Principal Beauty of the Ninth Book, which has more *Story* in it, and is fuller of Incidents, than any other in the whole Poem. *Satan's* traversing the Globe, and still keeping within the Shadow of the Night, as fearing to be discovered by the Angel of the Sun, who had before detected him, is one of those beautiful Imaginations [with] which [he] introduces this his second Series of Adventures. Having examined the Nature of every Creature, and found out one which was the most proper for his Purpose, he again returns to Paradise; and, to avoid Discovery, sinks by Night with a River that ran under the Garden, and rises up again through a Fountain that issued from it by the Tree of Life. The Poet, who, as we have before taken notice, speaks as little as possible in his own Person, and, after the example of *Homer*, fills every Part of his Work with Manners and Characters, introduces a Soliloquy of this Infernal Agent, who was thus restless in the Destruction of Man. He is then describ'd as gliding through the Garden under the resemblance of a Mist, in order to find out that Creature in which he design'd to tempt our first Parents. This Description has something in it very Poetical and Surprising.

*So saying, through each thicket Dank or Dry  
Like a black Mist, low creeping, he held on  
His Midnight Search, where soonest he might find  
The Serpent: him fast sleeping soon he found  
In Labyrinth of many a round self-roll'd,  
His head the midst, well stor'd with subtle wiles.*

The Author afterwards gives us a Description of the Morning, which is wonderfully suitable to a Divine Poem, and peculiar to that first Season of Nature; he represents the Earth before it was curst, as a great *Altar* breathing out its Incense from all parts, and

sending up a pleasant Savour to the Nostrils of its Creator; to which he adds a noble Idea of *Adam* and *Eve*, as offering their Morning Worship, and filling up the universal Confort of Praise and Adoration.

*Now when as sacred light began to dawn  
In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed  
Their morning incense, when all things that breath  
From th' Earth's great Altar send up silent praise  
To the Creatour, and his nostrils fill  
With grateful smell, forth came the human pair  
And joy'd their vocal worship to the Choir  
Of Creatures wanting voice——*

The Dispute which follows between our two first Parents is represented with great Art: It arises [proceeds] from a difference of Judgment, not of Passion, and is managed with Reason, not with Heat; it is such a Dispute as we may suppose might have happened in *Paradise*, had Man continued Happy and Innocent. There is a great Delicacy in the Moralities which are interspersed in *Adam's* Discourse, and which the most ordinary Reader cannot but take notice of. That force of Love which the Father of Mankind so finely describes in the Eighth Book, and which I inserted in my last *Saturday's* Paper, shews it self here in many beautiful Instances: As in those fond Regards he casts towards *Eve* at her parting from him.

*Her long with ardent look his eye pursued  
Delighted but desiring more her stay.  
Oft he to her his charge of quick return  
Repeated, she to him as oft engaged  
To be return'd by noon amid the Bowre.*

In his impatience and amusement during her Absence.

———*Adam the while  
Waiting desirous her return, had wove  
Of choicest flowers a Garland to adorn  
Her Tresses, and her rural labours crown,*

*As Reapers oft are wont their Harvest Queen.  
Great Joy he promised to his thoughts, and new  
Solace in her return, so long delay'd ;*

But particularly in that passionate Speech, where seeing her irrecoverably lost, he resolves to perish with her, rather than to live without her.

————— *Some cursed fraud  
Or enemy hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown,  
And me with thee hath ruin'd ; for with thee  
Certain my resolution is to die ;  
How can I live without thee, how forego  
Thy sweet converse and love so dearly join'd,  
To live again in these wild woods forlorn ?  
Should God create another Eve, and I  
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee  
Would never from my heart ; no, no, I feel  
The link of nature draw me : Flesh of Flesh,  
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy State  
Mine never shall be parted Blifs or Woe.*

The beginning of this Speech, and the Preparation to it, are animated with the same Spirit as the Conclusion, which I have here quoted.

The several Wiles which are put in Practice by the Tempter, when he found *Eve* separated from her Husband, the many pleasing Images of Nature, which are intermixt in this part of the Story, with its gradual and regular Progress to the fatal Catastrophe, are so very remarkable, that it would be superfluous to point out their several [respective] Beauties.

I have avoided mentioning any particular Similitudes in my Remarks on this great Work, because I have given a general account of them in my Paper on the First Book. There is one, however, in this part of the Poem which I shall here quote, as it is not only very beautiful, but the closest of any in the whole Poem : I mean that where the Serpent is describ'd as *rolling forward in all his Pride, animated by the evil*



Spirit, and conducting *Eve* to her Destruction, while *Adam* was at too great a distance from her, to give her his Assistance. These several Particulars are all of them wrought into the following Similitude.

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*Hope elevates, and Joy  
Brighten's his Crest, as when a wand'ring fire  
Compact of unctuous vapour, which the night  
Condenses, and the cold invirons round,  
Kindled through agitation to a flame,  
(Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends)  
Hovering and blazing with delusive light,  
Misleads th' amaz'd Night-wanderer from his way  
To boggs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,  
There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far :*

That secret Intoxication of Pleasure, with all those transient flushings of Guilt and Joy which the Poet represents in our first Parents upon their eating the forbidden Fruit, to those flaggings of Spirit, damps of Sorrow and mutual Accusations which succeed it, are conceiv'd with a wonderful Imagination, and described in very natural Sentiments.

When *Dido* in the Fourth *Æneid* yielded to that fatal Temptation which ruin'd her, *Virgil* tells us, the Earth trembled, the Heavens were filled with flashes of Lightning, and the Nymphs howl'd upon the Mountain Tops. *Milton*, in the same Poetical Spirit, has describ'd all Nature as disturbed upon *Eve's* eating the forbidden Fruit.

*So saying, her rash hand in evil hour  
Forth reaching to the Fruit, she plucked, she eat :  
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her Seat  
Sighing through all her works gave signs of Woe  
That all was lost*——

Upon *Adam's* falling into the same Guilt, the whole Creation appears a second time in Convulsions.

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*He scrupl'd not to eat  
Against his better knowledge ; not deceiv'd,*

## The SPECTATOR.

† *Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.* Hor.  
 { *He knows what best befits each character.* }

[ ———— *quis talia fando*  
*Temperet à lachrymis ?* ———— Virg.]  
 { *Who can relate such Woes without a Tear ?* }

Saturday, April 19. 1712.



THE Tenth Book of *Paradise Lost* has a greater variety of Persons in it than any other in the whole Poem. The Author upon the winding up of his Action introduces all those who had any Concern in it, and shews with great Beauty the influence which it had upon each of them. It is like the last Act of a well written Tragedy, in which all who had a part in it are generally drawn up before the Audience, and represented under those Circumstances in which the determination of the Action places them.

I shall therefore consider this Book under four Heads, in relation to the Celestial, the Infernal, the Human, and the Imaginary Persons, who have their respective Parts allotted in it.

To begin with the Celestial Persons : The Guardian Angels of *Paradise* are described as returning to Heaven upon the Fall of Man, in order to approve their Vigilance ; their Arrival, their manner of Reception, with the Sorrow which appeared in themselves, and in those Spirits who are said to Rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner, are very finely laid together in the following Lines.

*Up into Heav'n from Paradise in haste  
 Th' angelick guards ascended, mute and sad  
 For man, for of his state by this they knew  
 Much wond'ring how the subtle Fiend had stoln*

† This motto was changed in second edition for the one below it.

*Entrance unseen. Soon as th' unwelcome news  
 From earth arriv'd at Heaven Gate, displeas'd  
 All were who heard, dim sadness did not spare  
 That time Celestial visages, yet mixt  
 With pity, violated not their blifs.  
 About the new-arriv'd, in multitudes  
 Th' Æthereal people ran, to hear and know  
 How all befell: They tow'rs the throne supream  
 Accountable made haste to make appear  
 With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,  
 And easily approv'd; when the most High  
 Eternal father from his secret cloud,  
 Amidst in thunder utter'd thus his voice.*

The same Divine Person who in the foregoing parts of this Poem interceded for our first Parents before their Fall, overthrew the rebel Angels, and created the World, is now represented as descending to *Paradise*, and pronouncing Sentence upon the three Offenders. The cool of the Evening, being a Circumstance with which Holy Writ introduces this great Scene, it is Poetically described by our Author, who has also kept religiously to the form of Words, in which the three several Sentences were pass'd upon *Adam*, *Eve*, and the Serpent. He has rather chosen to neglect the numerousness of his Verse, than to deviate from those Speeches which are recorded on this great occasion. The Guilt and Confusion of our first Parents standing naked before their Judge, is touch'd with great Beauty. Upon the Arrival of *Sin* and *Death* into the Works of the Creation, the Almighty is again introduced as speaking to his Angels that surrounded him.

*See with what heat these Dogs of Hell advance  
 To waste and havock yonder world, which I  
 So fair and good created, &c.*

The following Passage is formed upon that glorious Image in Holy Writ which compares the Voice of an innumerable Host of Angels, uttering Hallelujahs, to the Voice of mighty Thunderings, or of many Waters.

annual Change which they are supposed to suffer, are Instances of this kind. The Beauty of the Diction is very remarkable in this whole Episode, as I have observed in the Sixth Paper of these my Remarks the great Judgment with which it was contrived.

The Parts of *Adam* and *Eve*, or the Humane Persons, come next under our Consideration. *Milton's* Art is no where more shewn than in his conducting the parts of these our first Parents. The Representation he gives of them, without falsifying the Story, is wonderfully contrived to influence the Reader with Pity and Compassion towards them. Tho' *Adam* involves the whole Species in Misery, his Crime proceeds from a Weakness which every Man is inclin'd to pardon and commiserate, as it seems rather the frailty of Humane Nature, than of the Person who offended. Every one is apt to excuse a Fault which he himself might have fallen into. It was the Excess of Love for *Eve* that ruined *Adam* and his Posterity. I need not add, that the Author is justified in this particular by many of the Fathers, and the most Orthodox Writers. *Milton* has by this means filled a great part of his Poem with that kind of Writing which the *French* Criticks call the *Tender*, and which is in a particular manner engaging to all sorts of Readers.

*Adam* and *Eve*, in the Book we are now considering, are likewise drawn with such Sentiments as do not only interest the Reader in their Afflictions, but raise in him the most melting Passions of Humanity and Commiseration. When *Adam* sees the several Changes in Nature produced about him, he appears in a disorder of Mind suitable to one who had forfeited both his Innocence and his Happiness. He is filled with Horror, Remorse, Despair; in the anguish of his Heart he expostulates with his Creator for giving [having given] him an unasked Existence.

*Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay  
To mould me Man, did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me, or here place*



*In this delicious Garden ? as my will  
Concurr'd not to my being, 'twere but right  
And equal to reduce me to my dust,  
Desirous to resign, and render back  
All I receiv'd——*

He immediately after recovers from his Presumption, owns his Doom to be just, and begs that the Death which is threaten'd him may be inflicted on him.

—————*Why delays  
His hand to execute what his decree  
Fix'd on this day ? Why do I overlive,  
Why am I mock'd with Death, and lengthen'd out  
To Deathless pain ? how gladly would I meet  
Mortality my Sentence, and be earth,  
Insensible, how glad would lay me down  
As in my mothers lap ? there should I rest  
And sleep secure ; his dreadful voice no more  
Would thunder in my ears, no fear of worse  
To me and to my off-spring, would torment me  
With cruel expectation.——*

This whole Speech is full of the like Emotion, and varied with all those Sentiments which we may suppose natural to a Mind so broken and disturb'd. I must not omit that generous Concern which our first Father shows in it for his Posterity, and which is so proper to affect the Reader.

—————*Hide me from the face  
Of God, whom to behold was then my height  
Of Happiness : yet well, if here would end  
The misery, I deserv'd it, and would bear  
My own deservings ; but this will not serve ;  
All that I eat, or drink, or shall beget,  
Is propagated Curse. O voice once heard  
Delightfully, encrease and multiply,  
Now Death to hear !——*

—————*In me all  
Posterity stands curs'd : Fair Patrimony  
That I must leave you, Sons ; O were I able  
To waste it all my self, and leave you none !*

*So disinherited how would you bless  
Me now your curse! Ah, why should all Mankind  
For one Mans fault thus guiltless be condemn'd  
If guiltless? But from me what can proceed  
But all corrupt——*

Who can afterwards behold the Father of Mankind extended upon the Earth, uttering his Midnight Complaints, bewailing his Existence, and wishing for Death, without sympathizing with him in his Distress?

*Thus Adam to himself lamented loud  
Through the still night, not now, as e're man fell  
Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black Air  
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom  
Which to his evil Conscience represented  
All things with double terrour: on the Ground  
Outstretch'd he lay, on the cold ground, and oft  
Curs'd his Creation, Death as oft accus'd  
Of tardy execution.——*

The Part of *Eve* in this Book is no less passionate, and apt to sway the Reader in her Favour. She is represented with great Tenderneſs as approaching *Adam*, but is ſpurn'd from him with a Spirit of Upbraiding and Indignation conformable to the Nature of Man, whose Paſſions had now gained the Dominion over him. The following Paſſage, wherein ſhe is deſcribed as renewing her Addreſſes to him, with the whole Speech that follows it, have ſomething in them exquisitely moving and pathetick.

*He add'd not, and from her turn'd: but Eve  
Not ſo repulſt, with tears that ceas'd not flowing  
And treſſes all diſorder'd, at his Feet  
Fell humble, and embracing them, beſought  
His peace, and thus proceeding in her plaint.*

*Forſake me not thus Adam, witneſs Heav'n  
What love ſincere and reverence in my heart  
I bear thee, and unwearied have offended,  
Unhappily deceiv'd; thy Suppliant  
I beg, and claſp thy knees; bereave me not,  
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,*

*Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,  
My only strength and stay: Forlorn of thee  
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?  
While yet we live scarce one short hour perhaps,  
Between us two let there be peace, &c.*

*Adam's* Reconcilement to her is worked up in the same Spirit of Tendernefs. *Eve* afterwards propotes to her Husband, in the Blindnefs of her Despair, that to prevent their Guilt from descending upon Posterity they should resolve to live Childless; or, if that could not be done, that they should seek their own Deaths by violent Methods. As those Sentiments naturally engage the Reader to regard the Mother of Mankind with more than ordinary Commiseration, they likewise contain a very fine Moral. The Resolution of dying to end our Miseries does not shew such a degree of Magnanimity as a Resolution to bear them, and submit to the Dispensations of Providence. Our Author has therefore, with great Delicacy, represented *Eve* as entertaining this Thought, and *Adam* as disapproving it.

We are, in the last place, to consider the Imaginary Persons, or *Sin* and *Death*, who act a large part in this Book. Such beautiful extended Allegories are certainly some of the finest Compositions of Genius; but, as I have before observed, are not agreeable to the Nature of an Heroic Poem. This of *Sin* and *Death* is very exquisite in its kind, if not considered as a Part of such a Work. The Truths contained in it are so clear and open that I shall not lose time in explaining them, but shall only observe, that a Reader who knows the strength of the *English* Tongue will be amazed to think how the Poet could find such apt Words and Phrases to describe the Action[s] of these [those] two imaginary Persons, and particularly in that Part where *Death* is exhibited as forming a Bridge over the *Chaos*: a Work suitable to the Genius of *Milton*.

Since the Subject I am upon gives me an Opportunity of speaking more at large of such Shadowy and



imaginary Persons as may be introduced into Heroic Poems, I shall beg leave to explain myself on [in] a Matter which is curious in its kind, and which none of the Criticks have treated of. It is certain *Homer* and *Virgil* are full of imaginary Persons, who are very beautiful in Poetry when they are just shown, without being engaged in any Series of Action. *Homer* indeed represents *Sleep* as a Person, and ascribes a short Part to him in his *Iliad*; but we must consider that tho' we now regard such a Person as entirely Shadowy and unsubstantial, the Heathens made Statues of him, placed him in their Temples, and looked upon him as a real Deity. When *Homer* makes use of other such Allegorical Persons it is only in short Expressions, which convey an ordinary Thought to the Mind in the most pleasing manner, and may rather be looked upon as Poetical Phrases than allegorical Descriptions. Instead of telling us that Men naturally fly when they are terrified, he introduces the Persons of *Flight* and *Fear*, who he tells us are inseparable Companions. Instead of saying that the Time was come when *Apollo* ought to have received his Recompence, he tells us that the *Hours* brought him his Reward. Instead of describing the Effects which *Minerva's Aegis* produced in Battell, he tells us that the Brims of it were encompassed by *Terrour, Rout, Discord, Fury, Pursuit, Massacre* and *Death*. In the same Figure of speaking he represents *Victory* as following *Diomedes*; *Discord* as the Mother of Funerals and Mourning, *Venus* as dressed by the *Graces*, *Bellona* as wearing *Terrour* and *Consternation* like a Garment. I might give several other Instances out of *Homer*, as well as a great many out of *Virgil*. *Milton* has likewise very often made use of the same way of speaking, as where he tells us that *Victory* sat on the right hand of the Messiah, when he march'd forth against the Rebel Angels; that at the rising of the Sun the *Hours* unbarr'd the Gates of Light; that *Discord* was the Daughter of *Sin*. Of the same nature are those Expressions where describing the singing of the Nightin-



gale, he adds, *Silence was pleased*; and upon the Messiah's bidding Peace to the *Chaos*, *Confusion heard his voice*. I might add innumerable other\* Instances of our Poet's writing in this beautiful Figure. It is plain that these I have mentioned, in which Persons of an imaginary Nature are introduced, are such short Allegories as are not designed to be taken in the literal Sense, but only to convey particular Circumstances to the Reader after an unusual and entertaining Manner. But when such Persons are introduced as principal Actors, and engaged in a Series of Adventures, they take too much upon them, and are by no means proper for an Heroic Poem, which ought to appear credible in its principal Parts. I cannot forbear therefore thinking that *Sin* and *Death* are as improper Agents in a Work of this Nature, as *Strength* and *Violence* [*Necessity*] in one of the Tragedies of *Eschylus*, who represented those two Persons nailing down *Prometheus* to a Rock, for which he has been justly censured by the greatest Criticks. I do not know any imaginary Person made use of in a more Sublime manner of thinking than that in one of the Prophets, who describing God as descending from Heaven, and visiting the Sins of Mankind, adds that dreadful Circumstance; *Before him went the Pestilence*. It is certain this imaginary Person might have been described in all her purple Spots. The *Fever* might have march'd before her, *Pain* might have stood at her right Hand, *Phrenzy* on her left, and *Death* in her Rear. She might have been introduced as gliding down from the Tail of a Comet, or darted upon the Earth in a Flash of Lightning: She might have tainted the Atmosphere with her Breath; the very glaring of her Eyes might have scattered Infection. But I believe every Reader will think that in such Sublime Writings the mentioning of her as it is done in Scripture has something in it more just, as well as great, than all that the most fanciful Poet could have bestowed upon her in the Richness of his Imagination.

## The SPECTATOR.

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*Crudelis ubique**Luclus, ubique pavor, & plurima Mortis Imago. Virg.**{ All Parts resound with Tumults, Complaints, and Fears,  
And grisly Death in fundry Shapes appears. }**Dryden. }*

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*Saturday, April 26. 1712.*

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ILTON has shewn a wonderful Art in describing that variety of Passions which arise in our first Parents upon the breach of the Commandment that had been given them. We see them gradually passing from the triumph of their Guilt thro' Remorse, Shame, Despair, Contrition, Prayer, and Hope, to a perfect and compleat Repentance. At the end of the Tenth Book they are represented as prostrating themselves upon the Ground, and watering the Earth with their Tears: To which the Poet joins this beautiful Circumstance, that they offer'd up their Penitential Prayers on the very place where their Judge appeared to them when he pronounced their Sentence.

*————— They forthwith to the place  
Repairing, where he judg'd them, prostrate fell  
Before him reverent, and both confess'd  
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd, &  
Watring the Ground —————*

[There is a Beauty of the same Nature in  
*Sophocles*, where *Oedipus*, after he has  
washed his Eyes, instead of breaking his  
Head against the Battlements (which furnish  
us with a good Argument for our *English* Nation  
not to be too much  
conducted to Mourn'  
*Life in that very*

Infancy, and where he should then have died, had the Will of his Parents been executed.]

As the Author never fails to give a Poetical turn to his Sentiments, he describes in the beginning of this Book the Acceptance which these their Prayers met with, in a short Allegory form'd upon that beautiful Passage in Holy Writ. *And another Angel came and stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the Golden Altar, which was before the throne: And the smoke of the incense which came with the Prayers of the Saints, ascended up before God.*

————— *To Heav'n their prayers  
Flew up, nor mis'd the way, by envious winds  
Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd  
Dimensionless through Heav'nly doors, then clad  
With incense, where the Golden Altar fum'd,  
By their great intercessor, came in sight  
Before the Father's throne*—————

We have the same Thought expressed a second time in the Intercession of the Messiah, which is conceived in very Emphatick Sentiments and Expressions.

Among the Poetical parts of Scripture which *Milton* has so finely wrought into this part of his Narration, I must not omit that wherein *Ezekiel* speaking of the Angels who appeared to him in a Vision, adds that *every one had four faces*, and that *their whole bodies, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings were full of eyes round about.*

————— *The Cohort bright  
Of watchful Cherubim; four faces each  
Had, like a double Janus, all their shape  
Spangled with eyes*—————

The assembling of all the Angels of Heaven to hear the Solemn Decree pass'd upon Man is represented in very lively Ideas. The Almighty is here describ'd as remembering Mercy in the midst of Judgment, and

commanding *Michael* to deliver his Message in the mildest terms, least the Spirit of Man, which was already broken with the Sense of his Guilt and Misery, should fail before him.

————— *Yet least they faint*

*At the sad Sentence rigorously urg'd,  
For I behold them softned and with tears  
Bewailing their excess, all terror hide.*

The Conference of *Adam* and *Eve* is full of moving Sentiments. Upon their going Abroad after the melancholy Night which they had passed together, they discover the Lion and the Eagle pursuing each of them their Prey towards the Eastern Gates of *Paradise*. There is a double Beauty in this Incident, not only as it presents great and just Omens which are always agreeable in Poetry; but as it expresses that Enmity which was now produced in the Animal Creation. The Poet, to shew the like changes in Nature, as well as to grace his Fable with a noble Prodigy, represents the Sun in an Eclipse. This particular Incident has likewise a fine effect upon the Imagination of the Reader, in regard to what follows: For, at the same time that the Sun is under an Eclipse, a bright Cloud descends in the Western quarter of the Heavens, filled with an Host of Angels, and more luminous than the Sun it self. The whole Theatre of Nature is darkned, that this glorious Machine may appear in all its lustre and magnificence.

————— *Why in the East*

*Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning light  
More orient in that Western cloud that draws  
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,  
And slow descends, with something heav'nly fraught?  
He err'd not; for by this the Heav'nly bands  
Down from a Sky of Jasper lighted now  
In Paradise, and on a Hill made halt;  
A glorious apparition————*

*I need not observe how properly this Author, who always suits his Parts to the Actors whom he intro-*



duces, has employed *Michael* in the Expulsion of our first Parents from *Paradise*. The Arch-angel on this occasion neither appears in his proper Shape, nor in that familiar manner with which *Raphael* the sociable Spirit entertained the Father of Mankind before the Fall. His Person, his Port and Behaviour, are suitable to a Spirit of the highest Rank, and exquisitely describ'd in the following Passage.

——— *Th' Archangel soon drew nigh  
Not in his Shape Celestial; but as man  
Clad to meet man; over his lucid arms  
A military vest of purple flow'd  
Livelier than Melibæan, or the grain  
Of Sarra, worn by Kings and Heroes old  
In time of truce; Iris had dipt the Wooff:  
His starry helm, unbuckled, shew'd him prime  
In Manhood where Youth ended; by his side  
As in a glistring Zodiack hung the Sword,  
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the Spear.  
Adam bow'd low; he kingly from his state  
Inclined not, but his coming thus declar'd.*

*Eve's Complaint* upon hearing that she was to be removed from the Garden of *Paradise* is wonderfully beautiful. The Sentiments are not only proper to the Subject, but have something in them particularly soft and womanish.

*Must I then leave thee, Paradise? thus leave  
Thee, native Soil, these happy walks and shades,  
Fit haunt of Gods? Where I had hoped to spend  
Quiet though sad the respite of that day  
That must be mortal to us both, O flow'rs  
That never will in other Climate grow,  
My early visitation, and my last  
At Even, which I bred up with tender hand  
From the first opening bud, and gave you names,  
Who now shall rear you to the Sun, or rank  
Your tribes, and water from th' ambrosial fount?  
Thee lastly, Nuptial bowre, by me adorn'd*

*With what to fight or smell was sweet; from thee  
How shall I part, and whither wander down  
Into a lower world, to this obscure  
And wild, how shall we breath in other air  
Less pure, accusom'd to immortal fruits?*

Adam's Speech abounds with Thoughts which are equally moving, but of a more Masculine and elevated Turn. Nothing can be conceived more Sublime and Poetical, than the following Passage in it:

*This most afflicts me, that departing hence  
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived  
His blessed Count'nance; here I could frequent,  
With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed  
Presence divine, and to my Sons relate;  
On this mount he appear'd, under this tree  
Stood visible, among these Pines his voice  
I heard, here with him at this fountain talk'd:  
So many grateful Altars I would rear  
Of grassie turf, and pile up every Stone  
Of lustre from the brook, in memory,  
Or monument to ages, and thereon  
Offer sweet smelling Gums and fruits and flowers:  
In yonder nether world where shall I seek  
His bright appearances, or footsteps trace?  
For though I fled him angry, yet recall'd  
To life prolong'd and promised race, I now  
Gladly behold though but his utmost Skirts  
Of Glory, and far off his Steps adore.*

The Angel afterwards leads Adam to the highest Mount of Paradise, and lays before him a whole Hemisphere, as a proper Stage for those Visions which were to be represented on it. I have before observed how the Plan of Milton's Poem is in many Particulars greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*. Virgil's Hero, in the last of these Poems, is entertained with a sight of all those who are to descend from him; but tho' that Episode is justly admired as one of the noblest

Designs in the whole *Aeneid*, every one must allow that this of *Milton* is of a much higher Nature. *Adam's* Vision is not confined to any particular Tribe of Mankind, but extends to the whole Species.

In this great Review, which *Adam* takes of all his Sons and Daughters, the first Objects he is presented with exhibit to him the Story of *Cain* and *Abel*, which is drawn together with much Closeness and Propriety of Expression. That Curiosity and natural Horror which arises in *Adam* at the Sight of the first dying Man is touched with great beauty.

*But have I now seen death, is this the way  
I must return to native dust? O Sight  
Of terror foul and ugly to behold,  
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!*

The second Vision sets before him the Image of Death in a great Variety of Appearances. The Angel, to give him a General Idea of those Effects, which his Guilt had brought upon his Posterity, places before him a large Hospital, or Lazar-house, fill'd with Persons lying under all kinds of Mortal Diseases. How finely has the Poet told us that the sick Persons languished under Lingring and Incurable Distempers by an apt and Judicious use of such Imaginary Beings, as those I mentioned in my last *Saturday's* Paper.

*Dire was the tossing, deep the Groans, Despair  
Tended the Sick, busie from Couch to Couch;  
And over them triumphant Death his dart  
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked  
With vows as their chief good and final hope.*

The Passion which likewise rises in *Adam* on this Occasion is very natural.

*Sight so deform what Heart of rock could long  
Dry-ey'd behold? Adam could not, but wept,  
Tho' not of Woman born; Compassion quell'd  
His best of Man, and gave him up to tears.*

The Discourse between the Angel and *Adam* which follows, abounds with noble Morals.

As there is nothing more delightful in Poetry, than a Contrast and Opposition of Incidents, the Author, after this melancholy prospect of Death and Sickness, raises up a Scene of Mirth, Love and Jollity. The secret Pleasure that steals into *Adam's* Heart, as he is intent upon this Vision, is imagined with great Delicacy. I must not omit the Description of the loose Female troupe, who seduced the Sons of God as they are call'd in Scripture.

*For that fair female troupe thou saw'st that seem'd  
Of Goddesses so Blithe, so Smooth, so Gay,  
Yet empty of all good wherein consists  
Womans domestick honour and chief praise;  
Bred only and compleated to the taste  
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,  
To dress, and trouble the tongue, and roul the Eye.  
To these that sober race of Men, whose lives  
Religious tittled them the Sons of God,  
Shall yield up all their vertue, all their fame  
Ignobly, to the trains and to the smiles  
Of those fair Atheists——*

The next Vision is of a quite contrary Nature, and filled with the Horrors of War. *Adam*, at the sight of it, melts into Tears, and breaks out in that passionate Speech;

*———O what are these  
Deaths ministers not Men, who thus deal death  
Inhumanly to Men, and multiply  
Ten thousand fold the Sin of him who slew  
His Brother: for of whom such Massacre  
Make they but of their Breth'ren, men of men?*

*Milton*, to keep up an agreeable variety in his Visions, after having raised in the Mind of his Reader the several Ideas of Terror which are conformable to the Description of War, passes on to those softer Images of Triumphs and Festivals, in that Vision of Lewdness and Luxury, which ushers in the Flood.



As it is visible, that the Poet had his Eye upon *Ovid's* account of the universal Deluge, the Reader may observe with how much Judgment he has avoided every thing that is redundant or puerile in the *Latin* Poet. We do not here see the Wolf swimming among the Sheep, nor any of those wanton Imaginations which *Seneca* has found fault with, as unbecoming this great Catastrophe of Nature. If our Poet has imitated that Verse in which *Ovid* tells us, that there was nothing but Sea, and that this Sea had no Shoar to it, he has not set the Thought in such a light as to incur the Censure which Criticks have passed upon it. The latter part of that Verse in *Ovid* is idle and superfluous; but just and beautiful in *Milton*.

*Jamque mare & tellus nullum discrimen habebant,  
Nil nisi pontus erat, deerant quoque littora ponto.* *Ovid.*

——— *Sea cover'd Sea,  
Sea without Shoar* ———

*Milton.*

In *Milton* the former part of the Description does not forestall the latter. How much more great and solemn on this occasion is that which follows in our *English* Poet,

——— *And in their palaces  
Where luxury late reign'd, Sea Monsters whelp'd  
And Stab'd* ———

than that in *Ovid*, where we are told, that the Sea Calves lay in those places where the Goats were used to browse? The Reader may find several other Parallel Passages in the *Latin* and *English* Description of the Deluge, wherein our Poet has visibly the Advantage. The Sky's being over-charged with Clouds, the descending of the Rains, the rising of the Seas, and the appearance of the Rainbow, are such Descriptions as every one must take notice of. The Circumstance relating to *Paradise* is so finely imagined and suitable to the Opinions of many learned Authors, that I cannot forbear giving it a place in this Paper.

Then shall this mount  
 Of Paradise by might of Waves be moved  
 Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,  
 With all his verdure spoil'd, and trees a drift  
 Down the great river to the op'ning Gulf,  
 And there take root an Island salt and bare,  
 The haunt of Seals and Orcs, and Sea-Mews clang:

The Transition which the Poet makes from the Vision of the Deluge, to the Concern it occasioned in *Adam*, is exquisitely graceful, and copied after *Virgil*, tho' the first Thought it introduces is rather in the Spirit of *Ovid*.

*How didst thou grieve, then, Adam, to behold  
 The end of all thy Off-spring, end so sad,  
 Depopulation; thee another flood,  
 Of tears and sorrow, a flood thee also drown'd,  
 And sunk thee as thy Sons: 'till gently rear'd  
 By th' Angel, on thy feet thou floodst at last,  
 Though comfortless, as when a father mourns  
 His Children, all in view destroy'd at once.*

I have been the more particular in my Quotations out of the Eleventh Book of *Paradise Lost*, because it is not generally reckoned among the most shining Books of this Poem. For which reason, the Reader might be apt to overlook those many Passages in it, which deserve our Admiration. The Eleventh and Twelfth are indeed built upon that single Circumstance of the Removal of our first Parents from *Paradise*; but tho' this is not in it self so great a Subject as that in most of the foregoing Books, it is extended and diversified with so many surprizing Incidents and pleasing Episodes, that these two last Books can by no means be looked upon as unequal Parts of this divine Poem. I must further add, that had not *Milton* represented our first Parents as driven out of *Paradise*, his Fall of Man would not have been compleat, and consequently his Action would have been imperfect.

# THE SPECTATOR.

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus—* Hor.

{—What we hear moves less than what we see.  
Roscommon.}

Saturday, May, 3. 1712.



MILTON, after having represented in Vision the History of Mankind to the First great Period of Nature, dispatches the remaining Part of it in Narration. He has devised a very handsome Reason for the Angel's proceeding with *Adam* after this manner; tho' doubtless, the true Reason was the difficulty which the Poet would have found to have shadowed out so mixt and complicated a Story in visible Objects. I could wish, however, that the Author had done it, whatever Pains it might have cost him. To give my Opinion freely, I think that the exhibiting Part of the History of Mankind in Vision, and part in Narrative, is as if an History Painter should put in Colours one half of his Subject, and write down the remaining part of it. If *Milton's* Poem flags any where, it is in this Narration, where in some places the Author has been so attentive to his Divinity, that he has neglected his Poetry. The Narration, however, rises very happily on several Occasions, where the Subject is capable of Poetical Ornaments, as particularly in the Confusion which he describes among the Builders of *Babel*, and in his short Sketch of the Plagues of *Egypt*. The Storm of Hail and Fire, with the Darknes that overspread the Land for three Days, are described with great Strength. The beautiful Passage, which follows, is raised upon noble Hints in Scripture.

Thus with ten wounds  
 The River-Dragon tam'd at length submits  
 To let his School-masters depart, and oft  
 Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as Ice  
 More harden'd after thaw, till in his rage  
 Pursuing whom he late dismiss'd, the Sea  
 Surrounds him with his host, but them lets pass  
 As on dry land between two Crystal walls,  
 And by the rod of Moses is command  
 Divided.

The *River-Dragon* is an Allusion to the Crocodile, which inhabits the Nile, from whence *Egypt* derives her Plenty. This Allusion is taken from that Sublime Passage in *Ezekiel*. *Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I am against thee Pharaoh King of Egypt, the great Dragon that lieth in the midst of his Rivers, which hath said, My River is mine own, and I have made it for my self.* Milton has given us another very noble and Poetical Image in the same Description, which is copied almost Word for Word out of the History of *Moses*.

*All night he will pursue, but his approach  
 Darkness defends between till morning watch;  
 Then through the fiery pillar and the cloud  
 God looking forth, will trouble all his host,  
 And craze their Chariot Wheels: when by command  
 Moses once more his potent Rod extends  
 Over the Sea; the Sea his Rod obeys:  
 On their Embattel'd ranks the waves return  
 And overwhelm their War:—*

As the Principal Design of this *Episode* was to give *Adam* an Idea of the Holy Person, who was to reinstate Human Nature in that Happiness and Perfection from which it had fallen, the Poet confines himself to the Line of *Abraham*, from whence the *Messiah* was to Descend. The Angel is described as seeing the Patriarch actually travelling towards the Land of *Promise*, which gives a particular Liveliness to this part of the Narration.

*I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith*



*He leaves his Gods, his Friends, and [his] native Soil  
 Ur of Chaldaea, passing now the Ford  
 To Haran, after him a cumbrous train  
 Of Herds and flocks, and numerous servitude;  
 Not wand'ring poor, but trusting all his wealth  
 With God, who call'd him, in a Land unknown.  
 Canaan he now attains; I see his tents  
 Pitch't about Sechem, and the neighbouring plain  
 Of Moreh, there by promise he receives  
 Gift to his Progeny of all that Land;  
 From Hamath Northward to the Desert South;  
 (Things by their names I call, though yet unnam'd.)*

As *Virgil's* Vision in the Sixth *Æneid* probably gave *Milton* the Hint of this whole *Episode*, the last Line is a Translation of that Verse, where *Anchises* mentions the Names of Places, which they were to bear hereafter.

*Hæc tum nomina erunt, nunc sunt sine nomine terræ.*

The Poet has very finely represented the Joy and Gladness of Heart, which rises in *Adam* upon his Discovery of the Messiah. As he sees his Day at a distance through Types and Shadows, he rejoices in it; but when he finds the Redemption of Man compleated, and *Paradise* again renewed, he breaks forth in Rapture and Transport,

*O goodness infinite, goodness immense!  
 That all this good of evil shall produce. &c.*

I have hinted, in my Sixth Paper on *Milton*, that an Heroic Poem, according to the Opinion of the best Criticks, ought to end happily, and leave the Mind of the Reader, after having conducted it through many Doubts and Fears, Sorrows and Disquietudes, in a state of Tranquillity and Satisfaction. *Milton's* Fable, which had so many other Qualifications to recommend it, was deficient in this Particular. It is here therefore, that the Poet has shewn a most exquisite Judgment, as well as the finest Invention, by finding out a Method to supply this Natural Defect in his Subject. Accordingly he leaves the Adversary of Mankind, in

the last View which he gives us of him, under the lowest State of Mortification and Disappointment. We see him chewing Ashes, grovelling in the Dust, and loaden with Supernumerary Pains and Torments. On the contrary, our two first Parents are comforted by Dreams and Visions, cheered with Promises of Salvation, and, in a manner, raised to a greater Happiness than that which they had forfeited: In short, *Satan* is represented miserable in the height of his Triumphs, and *Adam* triumphant in the height of Misery.

*Milton's* Poem ends very nobly. The last Speeches of *Adam* and the Arch-angel are full of Moral and Instructive Sentiments. The Sleep that fell upon *Eve*, and the effects it had in quieting the Disorders of her Mind, produces the same kind of Consolation in the Reader, who cannot peruse the last beautiful Speech which is ascrib'd to the Mother of Mankind, without a secret Pleasure and Satisfaction.

*Whence thou return'st, and whither went'st, I know;  
For God is also in Sleep, and dreams advise,  
Which he hath sent propitious, some great good  
Presaging, since with Sorrow and Hearts distress  
Wearied I fell asleep: but now lead on;  
In me is no delay: with thee to go  
Is to stay here; without thee here to stay  
Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me  
Art all things under Heav'n, all places thou  
Who for my wilful crime art banish'd hence.  
This further Consolation yet secure  
I carry hence; though all by me is lost  
Such favour, I unworthy, am vouchsaf'd,  
By me the promis'd Seed shall all restore.*

The following Lines which conclude the Poem rise in a most glorious blaze of Poetical Images and Expressions.

*Heliodorus* in his *Æthiopicks* acquaints us that the Motion of the Gods differs from that of Mortals, as the former do not stir their Feet, nor proceed Step by Step, but slide o'er the Surface of the Earth by an

uniform Swimming of the whole Body. The Reader may observe with how Poetical a Description *Milton* has attributed the same kind of Motion to the Angels who were to take Possession of *Paradise*.

*So spake our Mother Eve, and Adam heard  
Well pleas'd, but answer'd not; for now too nigh  
Th' Arch-angel flood, and from the other hill  
To their fix'd station, all in bright array  
The Cherubim descended; on the ground  
Gliding meteorous, as ev'ning mist  
Ris'n from a River, o'er the marsh glides,  
And gathers ground fast at the lab'ers heel  
Homeward returning. High in Front advanc'd,  
The brandish'd Sword of God before them blas'd  
Fierce as a Comet*————

The Author helped his Invention in the following Passage, by reflecting on the Behaviour of the Angel, who, in Holy Writ, has the Conduct of *Lot* and his Family. The Circumstances drawn from that Relation are very gracefully made use of on this Occasion.

*In either hand the hastning Angel caught  
Our ling'ring Parents, and to the Eastern gate  
Led them direct; and down the Cliff as fast  
To the subjected plain; then disappear'd.  
They looking back &c.*————

The Prospect [Scene] which our first Parents are surpris'd with upon their looking back on *Paradise*, wonderfully strikes the Reader's Imagination, as nothing can be more natural than the Tears they shed on that Occasion.

*They looking back, all th' Eastern side beheld  
Of Paradise, so late their happy Seat,  
Wav'd over by that flaming brand, the gate  
With dreadful faces throng'd and fiery Arms:  
Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wiped them soon;  
The world was all before them, where to chuse  
Their place of rest, and providence their Guide:*

If I might presume to offer at the smallest Alteration



in this Divine Work, I should think the Poem would end better with the Passage here quoted, than with the two Verses which follow.

*They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,  
Through Eden took their solitary way.*

These two Verses, though they have their Beauty, fall very much below the foregoing Passage, and renew in the Mind of the Reader that Anguish which was pretty well laid by that Consideration,

*The World was all before them, where to chuse  
Their place of rest, and providence their Guide.*

The number of Books in *Paradise Lost* is equal to those of the *Aeneid*. Our Author in his First Edition had divided his Poem into ten Books, but afterwards broke the Seventh and the Eleventh each of them into two different Books, by the help of some small Additions. This second Division was made with great Judgment, as any one may see who will be at the pains of examining it. It was not done for the sake of such a Chimerical Beauty as that of resembling *Virgil* in this particular, but for the more just and regular Disposition of this great Work.

Those who have read *Bossu*, and many of the Criticks who have written since his time, will not pardon me if I do not find out the particular Moral which is inculcated in *Paradise Lost*. Tho' I can by no means think with the last-mentioned *French* Author, that an Epic Writer first of all pitches upon a certain Moral, as the Ground-work and Foundation of his Poem, and afterwards finds out a Story to it: I am, however, of Opinion, that no just Heroic Poem ever was, or can be made, from whence one great Moral may not be deduced. That which reigns in *Milton* is the most universal and most useful that can be imagined: it is in short this, *that Obedience to the Will of God makes Men happy, and that Disobedience makes them miserable*. This is visibly the Moral of the principal Fable which turns upon *Adam* and *Eve*, who



continued in *Paradise* while they kept the Command that was given them, and were driven out of it as soon as they had transgressed. This is likewise the Moral of the principal Episode, which shews us how an innumerable multitude of Angels fell from their State of Bliss, and were cast into Hell upon their Disobedience. Besides this great Moral, which may be looked upon as the Soul of the Fable, there are an infinity of Under-Morals which are to be drawn from the several parts of the Poem, and which make this Work more useful and instructive than any other Poem in any Language.

Those who have criticised on the *Odyssey*, the *Iliad*, and *Æneid*, have taken a great deal of pains to fix the number of Months or Days contain'd in the Action of each of those Poems. If any one thinks it worth his while to examine this Particular in *Milton*, he will find that from *Adam's* first Appearance in the Fourth Book, to his Expulsion from *Paradise* in the Twelfth, the Author reckons ten Days. As for that part of the Action which is described in the three first Books, as it does not pass within the Regions of Nature, I have before observ'd that it is not subject to any Calculations of Time.

I have now finish'd my Observations on a Work which does an Honour to the *English* Nation. I have taken a general View of it under those four Heads, the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments and the Language, and made each of them the Subject of a particular Paper. I have in the next place spoken of the Censures which our Author may incur under each of these Heads, which I have confined to two Papers, tho' I might have enlarged the number, if I had been disposed to dwell on so ungrateful a Subject. I believe, however, that the severest Reader will not find any little fault in Heroic Poetry, which this Author has fallen into, that does not come under one of those Heads among which I have distributed his several Blemishes. After having thus treated at large of *Paradise Lost*, I could not think it sufficient to have celebrated this Poem in the whole, without descending to Particulars. I have therefore bestowed a

Paper upon each Book, and endeavour'd not only to shew [prove] that the Poem is beautiful in general, but to point out its particular Beauties, and to determine wherein they consist. I have endeavour'd to shew how some Passages are beautiful by being Sublime, others by being Soft, others by being Natural; which of them are recommended by the Passion, which by the Moral, which by the Sentiment, and which by the Expression. I have [likewise] endeavour'd to shew how the Genius of the Poet shines by a happy Invention, a distant Allusion, or a judicious Imitation; how he has copied or improved *Homer* or *Virgil*, and rais'd his own Imaginations by the use which he has made of several Poetical Passages in Scripture. I might have inserted [also] several Passages of *Tasso*, which our Author has likewise\* imitated; but as I do not look upon *Tasso* to be a sufficient Voucher, I would not perplex my Reader with such Quotations, as might do more Honour to the *Italian* than the *English* Poet. In short, I have endeavour'd to particularize those innumerable Kinds of Beauty, which it would be tedious to recapitulate, but which are essential to Poetry, and which may be met with in the Works of this great Author. Had I thought, at my first engaging in this Design, that it would have led me to so great a length, I believe I should never have entered upon it; but the kind Reception which it has met with among those whose Judgments I have a Value for, as well as the uncommon Demands which my Bookseller tells me has been made for these particular Discourses, give me no Reason to repent of the Pains I have been at in composing them.



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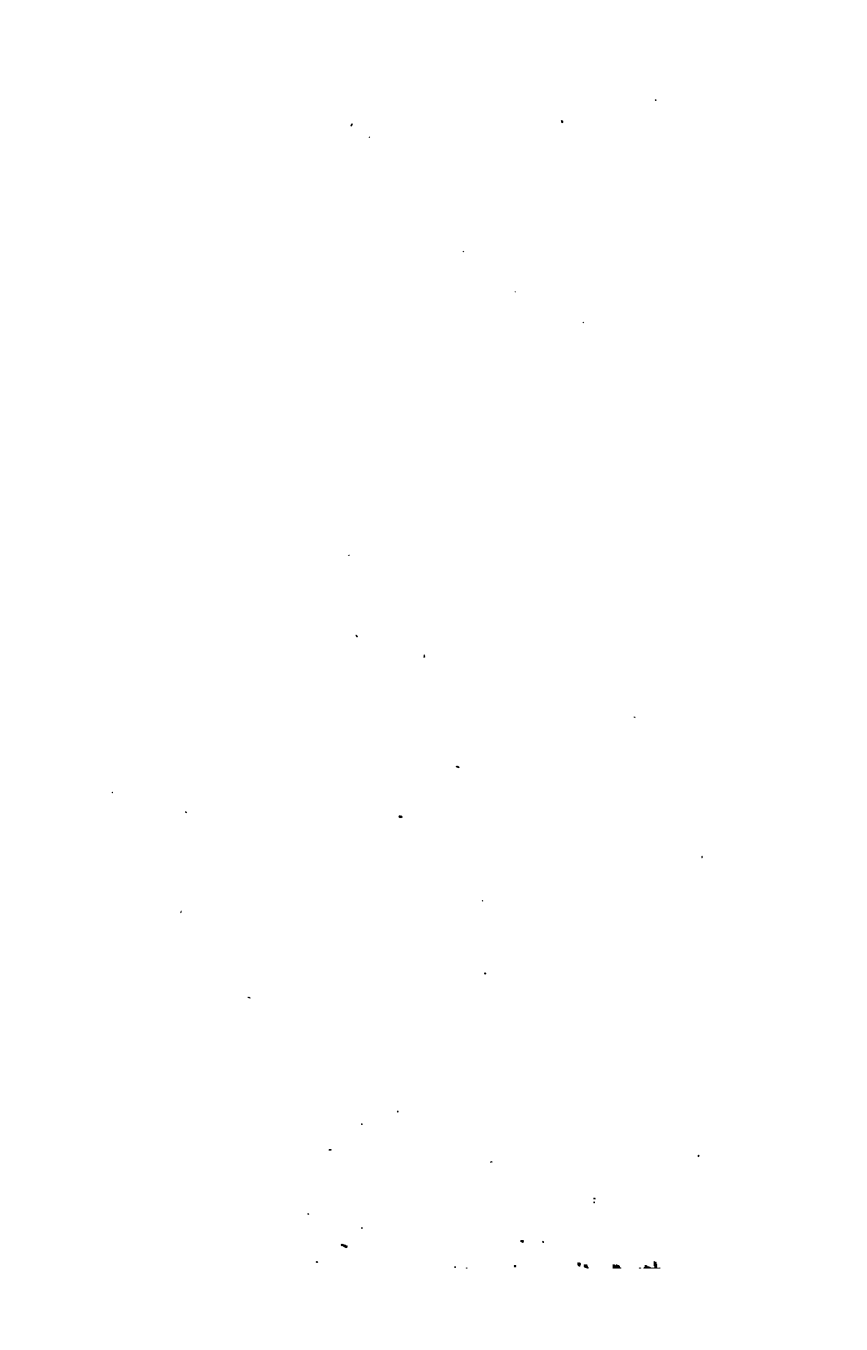
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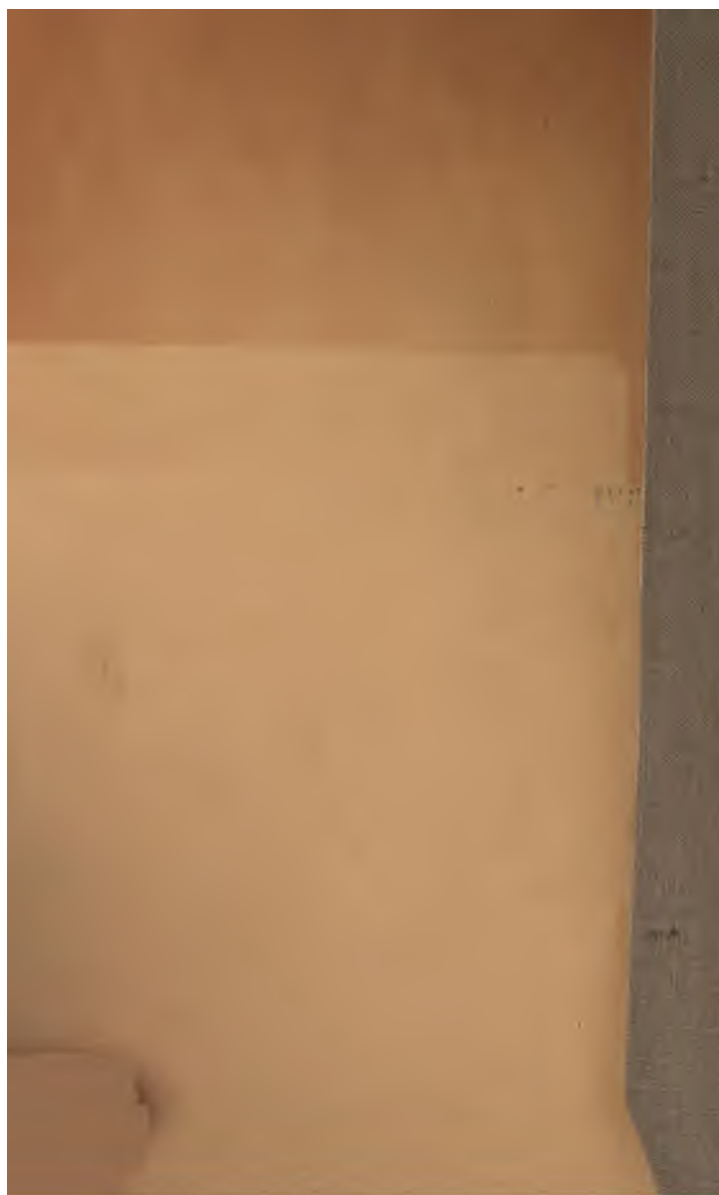


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